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BRITISH AND POLISH INTELLIGENCE SERVICES
IN THE 20TH CENTURY. CO-OPERATION AND RIVALRY

The origins of the modern British secret service arose as a reaction to the challenges faced by the British Empire at the beginning of the 20th c. This was a mounting psychosis of the German threat, which found its reflection in William Le Queux's¹ famous book of 1909, giving an exaggerated picture of German espionage in the British Isles as well as of the danger of Irish terrorism, going back to the 19th c., which left its bloody imprint on the entire 20th c. history of Great Britain. The nuclei of the present British secret service, MI 6, i.e. Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and MI 5, i.e. Security Service — counter-intelligence, came into being in 1909 when Poland did not exist as a state and Polish lands, disrupted by partitions, did not come within the British sphere of interest².

The situation did not change much during World War I. Because the Polish question was treated in London as an internal problem of allied Russia, up till the February Revolution of 1917 the competing groups of Polish politicians were of no interest to British intelligence. On the other hand, the counter intelligence was very suspicious of Poles — citizens of Central Powers — who during the war found themselves in the British Isles, even when they declared their pro-ally attitude³. This resulted from the fact that the British Secret Services gave priority to the defence of their own country and to gaining the richest possible information on the potential and designs of Germany and her allies.

¹ See the new edition of W. Le Queux, *Spies of the Kaiser*, London 1996.

² More extensively on the origin of the British secret services see: C. Andrew, *Secret Service. The Making of the British Intelligence Community*, London 1986.

³ N. Davies, *The Poles in Great Britain 1914–1919*, "The Slavonic and East European Review", vol. 50, 1972, № 118, pp. 63–89.

The Polish state was revived in November 1918 in an atmosphere of chaos which reigned in Central–Eastern Europe as a result of the defeat of the central states and the civil war in Russia, following the Bolshevik coup. The necessity to create a new order after the war made British intelligence interested in those areas of Europe which so far had not been of interest to London. Polish foreign policy came into conflict with the British designs in 1919. Both sides had different visions of Poland's frontiers and the role she was to play in this part of Europe.

By subjecting the Secret Intelligence Service to the Foreign Office in 1919, the activities of the SIS became subservient to the FO for many decades to come. The opening of the British Legation in Warsaw the same year signified the beginning of the operation in Poland of the British SIS station, acting, just as in other countries, under the cover of the Passport Control Office, i.e. a visa section. However, the most important secret information on Poland did not come from this source, or from the British Military Missions so frequently visiting Poland in 1919–1920, but from the breaking of diplomatic codes by the special section of the Admiralty transformed on Nov. 1, 1919, into the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS). During the struggle for the territorial shape of the Polish state the British regularly deciphered the telegrams exchanged between the Polish Legation in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) in Warsaw, thus getting practically an unlimited insight into the Polish intentions. Additional information on Poland was gained by British espionage from breaking the diplomatic codes of other countries, mainly France, the USA and Czechoslovakia. In the years 1919–1925 there was practically no diplomatic service in the world whose secret telegrams or radiograms could not be deciphered by the GC&CS⁴.

During the 1919–1920 Polish–Bolshevik war, the British Secret Services systematically broke also Bolshevik Russia's

⁴ In the second half of the 1990s British authorities gradually began divulging the intercepted diplomatic telegrams, in the terminology of intelligence and diplomacy called "BJs". They are now in the Public Record Office, Kew (henceforward: PRO), file HW 12. They have not been included in Foreign Office documents, which makes it difficult to define the influence of intelligence actions in the decision-making processes in this institution, although it does not free historians from the obligation to verify many theses posed by the history of diplomacy in the first decade of the inter-war period with new archival materials.

codes used for contact with her representatives, among other countries, in Great Britain. The deciphered telegrams reached Prime Minister David Lloyd George and other members of the British Cabinet as a rule sooner than their actual addressees. They depicted the deceitful diplomatic game of the Bolsheviks who presented themselves as victims of Polish aggression, willing to enter peaceful negotiations, and in fact strove to conquer Poland. A telegram intercepted by the British shows that Maxim Litvinov, a Bolshevik representative in Copenhagen, suggested on August 11, 1920, to his counterpart in London, Lev Kamenev, and head of the Bolshevik Russian diplomacy, Georgij Chicherin, that it would be advisable to conclude peace with the Polish government before seizing Warsaw and Sovietizing Poland, although "The proclamation of a Soviet Government in Warsaw before the entry of our troops would be an ideal solution". The successive telegrams deciphered by the British secret services show that although the leader of the Bolshevik state Vladimir Lenin doubted Warsaw could be seized after the Battle of Warsaw on August 20, the next day Chicherin instructed Kamenev in London that the withdrawal of the Bolshevik army was temporary and there was no question of catastrophe⁵. However, the knowledge of Russian designs on Poland as well as of the subversive activity of Lenin's emissaries in the British Isles did not change Britain's hostile policy towards Poland, created by premier Lloyd George. He turned out to be extremely resistant even to personal attacks directed against him by Lenin in his correspondence with his representatives in London. Even the fact that British security was threatened, of which the Prime Minister was continually reminded by Secretary of State for War Winston S. Churchill, and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, who were frustrated by the lack of his reaction to evident proof of Bolshevik intentions, did not cause any counteraction⁶.

In London no consideration was given, either, to the possibility of conveying to the Polish side even the part of the information on Bolshevik plans essential to Poland. This cannot be

⁵ *Lloyd George Papers*, F/2037, Chicherin to Kamenev August 20, 1920; F/203/10, Chicherin to Kamenev August 21, 1920.

⁶ *Lloyd George Papers*, F/203/1/10, Chicherin to Krasin June 12, 1920; M. Gilbert, *World in Torment. Winston S. Churchill 1917-1921*, London 1990, pp. 422-426.

explained by safety precautions, but rather by the indifference towards the fortunes of the Polish state, since numerous British deliberate leakages into the press several times warned the Bolsheviks in 1920 that the secrecy of their correspondence was broken. Fortunately for British intelligence, the changed codes were soon broken again⁷.

In the years 1921–1923, during the fight of the Polish diplomacy for the international recognition of the Polish eastern frontier, delineated in the Treaty of Riga, the British intensively continued breaking Polish codes and knew the content of the diplomatic correspondence of the Polish Legation in London. Although a few days usually elapsed from the interception of a telegram to its deciphering, given the slower pace of the diplomatic life this gave the British diplomacy an opportunity to react adequately to Polish actions.

After 1923 British signal intelligence continued intercepting and deciphering Polish telegrams. They concerned among other things Polish–Lithuanian relations. This business certainly continued until January 1929. The number of deciphered messages in the second half of the 1920s was, however, minimal in comparison to the period of the Polish–Bolshevik War and increased only at crucial moments, e.g. the coup of May 1926. This was due to the smaller interest in Poland shown by London, as well as to the limited forces that the GC&CS could use for learning the diplomatic secrets of at least a dozen–odd countries.

One can hardly speak of the co-operation of British and Polish intelligence in the inter-war period. This was due mainly to the political differences between both states and a lack, up till 1939, of their alliance ties. However, their mutual relations were marked not only by rivalry. Both sides were connected by their fight, both internal and external, against Communism. However, the SIS conducted its operations against the USSR rather from the territory of the Baltic states, especially after the expulsion from Poland in the autumn of 1921 of many Russians who were the object of British interest, due to their engagement in the fight against the Bolsheviks. Among them was Boris Savinkov, whose anti-Bolshevik actions enjoyed the support of Józef Piłsudski, and later Winston Churchill. This, however, was not translated

⁷ C. Andrew, *op. cit.*, pp. 385–388.

into support for Poles by the British Secret Services. The Polish intelligence service probably knew of Savinkov's and his collaborators' actions, the more so because he chose the territory of Poland in order to cross the frontier of the USSR in 1924, and fell victim to OGPU provocation⁸.

The contacts of the British and Polish intelligence services in the Soviet field started to gather strength since 1934, although they did not take a formal character⁹. Both sides had little confidence in each other and there is no indication of the British giving the Poles access to information they gained in 1934–1937 from deciphering correspondence between the headquarters in Moscow and the secret Communist broadcasting stations that were part of the secret communication network of Comintern, based in Basel, Zurich, Paris, Amsterdam and Prague (of special interest to Polish intelligence)¹⁰.

Co-operation aimed at counteracting the terrorists from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was much more effective. The successful attempt of this grouping on the Minister of Internal Affairs Bronisław Pieracki's life on June 15, 1934, made the safety precautions concerning members of the Polish Cabinet more stringent. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck, because of his frequent foreign trips, seemed to be an easy target for OUN members resident in many European countries. The Polish side informed the British of this threat before Beck's first visit as Minister to Great Britain in November 1936. The SIS received from Polish intelligence service the copies of OUN exiled activists' correspondence reflecting the Lithuanian government's many years' co-operation with this organization (providing the terrorists with money, passports and other assistance)¹¹. One

⁸ G. Brook-Shepherd, *Iron Maze. The Western Secret Services and the Bolsheviks*, London 1998, pp. 258–274; D. Stafford, *Churchill and Secret Service*, London 1997, pp. 112–126.

⁹ In the 1920s the Polish and British secret services used to exchange information concerning the USSR and the communist movement, but these contacts were not the result of a permanent co-operation, see A. Peplowski, *Wywiad polski na ZSRR 1921–1939 (Polish Intelligence Concerning the USSR 1921–1939)*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 207–214.

¹⁰ PRO, see file HW 17.

¹¹ PRO, FO 371/19962, C 8457/445/55, SIS report of Nov. 25, 1936. These documents come from the so-called "archive of Senyk", OUN resident in Prague and the Polish Second Department got access to them due to a pro-Polish officer of Czechoslovak intelligence in 1933, see W. Żeleński, *Zabójstwo ministra Pierackiego (The Murder of Minister Pieracki)*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 50–58.

could hardly suspect at that time that a dozen-odd years later Stefan Bandera, the organizer of the attempt on Pieracki, would become an important partner of the SIS in their attempts to stimulate a Ukrainian uprising against the Soviet occupation¹².

The Polish Intelligence Service systematically watched the activity of the SIS station in Warsaw, all the more so, because the SIS's habit of hiding their personnel in the Passport Control Office became widely known in the 1930s to secret service members. The combination of intelligence work with visa-granting sometimes yielded disastrous results for British diplomacy and intelligence. In the summer of 1936 the chief of the Warsaw SIS station, Col. J. P. Shelly and his deputy Capt. H. T. Handscombe transferred the execution of visa duties to their Polish subordinates, who soon developed a large scale black marked sale of visas to Palestine for the Jews. The discovery of this affair by the Polish police threatened officers of British intelligence who had no diplomatic immunity, with having to give evidence before the Polish court of justice. Finally, they managed to avoid it; however, the British never drew conclusions from this incident and did not change the situation of the SIS stations up till the outbreak of the war, thus facing the threat of easy exposure¹³.

Polish intelligence was interested in the correspondence between the British Embassy in Warsaw and its subordinate consulates. The Vice-Consul from Katowice, Leonard G. Holliday, suspected in July 1937 that his letters were intercepted by the Poles, and although the Foreign Office said nothing about envelopes opened or seals tampered with or forged, the British

¹² K. Philby says that British intelligence had maintained contacts with Bandera even before the war. K. Philby, *My Silent War*, New York 1968, pp. 199–200. However, this testimony seems doubtful, especially considering the fact that Philby did not work then for the SIS. After giving Poland their guarantees on March 31, 1939, the British were very cautious in all their statements concerning the situation of Ukrainians in Poland, since they did not want to hurt Warsaw. Considering the political control exercised over the SIS by the Foreign Office and the knowledge they had of the OUN's terrorist actions, any closer contacts of British intelligence with this organization seem improbable.

¹³ N. West, *SIS. British Secret Intelligence Service Operations 1909–1945*, London 1987, pp. 88–91; C. Andrew, *op. cit.*, p. 533. Without diplomatic immunity an employee of the visa section of the British legation in Tallin, Alexander McKibb, found it difficult to leave Estonia after it was annexed by the USSR in the summer of 1940. In August 1940 the Russians demanded that he pay a tax for running a sawmill. In order to save the SIS officer, the Foreign Office agreed to pay the considerable sum of 2,000 pounds, thus making his departure possible, PRO, FO 371/24845, N 6515/30/38, Helsinki to FO Sept. 7, 1940.

Ministry acknowledged this as quite probable¹⁴. To show that they were not surprised suffice it to say that in 1923 a special section N of the British Foreign Office was established with the task to intercept countries' mail sent by the foreign diplomatic offices in the British Isles and all over the Empire¹⁵.

Although the diplomatic correspondence sent by the radio or cable, intercepted by the GC&CS and rendered accessible to the researchers by the Public Records Office, in the case of Poland ends in 1929, yet it seems that specialists from this institution were able to break some Polish codes still in the 1930s. During the Munich crisis they managed to decipher Ambassador Edward Raczynski's telegram from London where he informed Beck that British public opinion concerning Poland's annexing the territory beyond the Olza River would not be negative. On seeing this document, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Alexander Cadogan, who supervised the work of the GC&CS on behalf of this ministry, intervened with the Polish Ambassador and tried to clear up the misunderstanding in such a way as not to disclose his familiarity with the content of his Polish interlocutor's correspondence¹⁶.

It is generally accepted in historiography that at the beginning of 1939 London was uncertain about the possibility of a Polish-German rapprochement. The recently revealed note by Assistant Under-Secretary of State William Strang, based on intelligence reports, shows that there was a general awareness in this department of the content of Beck's talks with the Chancellor of the Third Reich Adolf Hitler and Chief of German diplomacy Joachim von Ribbentrop in January 1939, although it is hard to define unequivocally the influence of this information on the course of the decision-making process in London¹⁷.

The British guarantees for Poland of March 31, 1939, which initiated the alliance of both countries in which they were not equal partners, and precipitated Hitler's decision to attack his eastern neighbour, did not produce an immediate tightening of

¹⁴ PRO, FO 371/20766, C 5879/5879/55, British Embassy (Warsaw) to FO July 11, 1937.

¹⁵ M. Smith, *New Cloak, Old Dagger. How Britain's Spies Came In from the Cold*, London 1996, p. 93.

¹⁶ PRO, FO 371/21568, C 10676/2319/12, notes by R. Vansittart and Cadogan of Sept. 23, 1938.

¹⁷ PRO, FO 371/23015, C 1169/54/18, a note by Strang of Jan. 17, 1939.

relations between the secret services of both countries. During the British–French talks at the General Staff level in the spring of 1939, both sides agreed that they would not help Poland in the case of Hitler’s attack, and her fate would depend on the further course of the war¹⁸. The Polish side exhibited a far-reaching shortsightedness as to the plans of its Western allies. However, one can hardly place the blame on the Second Department (Intelligence) of the Polish General Staff, although it is amazing how little understanding there was of the plans of France, whose military thought was well-known in Poland. The fact that British asseverations during Polish–British talks at General Staff level in May 1939 were taken by the Poles at face value, testifies to the misinterpretation of London’s intentions by the Polish military and the secret services. There were divergencies in Polish politics in the interpretation of the significance of the British guarantees. Minister Beck perceived them rather as an element of a diplomatic game which was to deter Hitler by peaceful means, while the Polish military approached them as an element of safety in case of war. The confrontation of those ideas with reality turned out to be disastrous for Poland.

Following March 31, 1939, the SIS did not pass on to Poland any valuable information on the military potential of Germany. This was caused by the opportunistic British policy towards Poland, although, on the other hand, the British had nothing substantial to offer. They had no valuable agents in Germany and were not able to break the German machine codes, the so-called Enigma. On the other hand, the Polish Cipher Bureau managed to achieve this. When Poland was involved in the British orbit of influence, probably nobody in London could suppose that due to their guarantees, the British would gain secret information contributing fundamentally to the Western Allies’ victories on the European front.

Due to the co-operation of Polish and French intelligence and the genius of three Polish mathematicians: Marian Rejewski, Jerzy Różycki and Henryk Zygalski, from the end of 1932 onwards the Cipher Bureau started reading, though with some breaks and a small delay, the telegrams of German institutions, especially the army, which used Enigma machines for cyphering radio

¹⁸ A. Prażmowska, *Britain, Poland and the Eastern Front, 1939*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 80–84.

communication. In mid-December 1938, following further German improvements, Polish cryptoanalysts lost the capability of deciphering German codes, except for the communication of SS Security Service. At the French initiative on Jan. 9–10, 1939, in Paris, the first tri-lateral French–Polish–British cryptological conference took place, devoted to the German codes. The Poles, just like other participants, satisfied themselves merely with studying the intentions of their partners, without informing them of their own fantastic achievements. The next half-year of Polish work on Enigma did not lead to resuming a relatively regular reading of the radio-communication of the particular branches of German service. Without an immense investment in the centres of Cipher Bureau at Pyry, which surpassed Polish financial possibilities, one could not think of another breakthrough in its work. In this situation the Polish General Staff decided to share the information it possessed with the French and the British. This happened on July 24–27, 1939, during conferences at Pyry and in Warsaw. The British representatives: Head of the GC&CS Alastair Denniston and his collaborator Dillwyn Knox, left Poland clearly surprised by the achievements of the Polish Cipher Bureau. The Polish analysts transmitted the technology of the breaking of Enigma to the allies. This, however, did not guarantee the possibility to read the code in any circumstances, the more so, because the German did not stay idle and continually improved their system¹⁹.

Polish openness was not rewarded in August 1939. The French, who knew of the secret protocol for the German–Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939, did not inform the Polish side. The predicament of British intelligence and diplomacy was more complicated. On the basis of materials from the Public Record Office it is impossible to say for sure whether in the last week of August 1939 the British knew the content of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact. Archival records are ambiguous. Polish intelligence, and the more so diplomacy, could only blame themselves. For the majority of observers outside Poland the significance of the open part of the German–Soviet pact on non-aggression was only too obvious at that time²⁰.

¹⁹ W. Kozaczuk, *W kręgu Enigmy (In Enigma's Orbit)*, Warszawa 1986, pp. 53–110; J. Garliński, *Intercept. Secrets of the Enigma War*, London 1979, pp. 17–47; R. Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War. The Secret Story*, London 1978, pp. 29–45.

The Polish–British Alliance concluded two days later was above all of political significance only, and did not include a military convention, let alone agreements as to the co-operation of secret services²¹.

The September defeat brought in its wake the disorganization of Polish military intelligence work, the loss of some archives and difficulties in financing. Since the Polish Government had its seat in France, the British and the French agreed that the Second Department of the Polish Commander-in-Chief's Staff would closely co-operate with French intelligence. The lot of Polish cryptoanalysts was similar; they were placed in the "Bruno" centre, where together with the French they continued breaking German ciphers and codes, passing on the materials thus gained to Bletchley Park, where the GC&CS had moved²². Besides, British intelligence was not liable to tighten the co-operation with Poles in regard to Germany. On the contrary, the SIS became an instrument in the 1939 British policy to organize the channels of communication with an alleged anti-Hitler opposition in Germany, as a result of which this service discredited itself on November 8, 1939, in Venlo, where would-be opposition SS-men abducted from the territory of Holland to Germany two high-rank SIS officers: Maj. Richard Stevens and Capt. Sigismund Payne-Best, thus holding the British Secret Service up to ridicule²³. Nothing indicated that Polish diplomacy and intelligence were aware of the scope of the secret British–German contacts.

At the end of 1939 there was not so much talk of British–Polish intelligence co-operation against the Germans as of their mutual work against the USSR, a country with which only Poland was in a state of war. During the Polish Premier General Władys-

²⁰ J. Tebinka, *Polityka brytyjska wobec problemu granicy polsko-radzieckiej 1939–1945 (British Policy Regarding the Problem of the Polish–Soviet Frontier 1939–1945)*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 50–52, 60; R. Wapiński, *Rezultat kalkulacji czy chciejstwa? Kwestia współdziałania Niemiec i ZSRR przed 17 września 1939 roku w wyobrażeniach polskich środowisk przywódczych (zarys problematyki) (Calculation or Wishful Thinking? The Question of German–Soviet Co-operation before September 17, 1939, in the Imagination of the Polish Leadership. An Outline of the Issue)*, in: *17 września 1939*, ed. by H. Bątownski, Kraków 1994.

²¹ *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej. Zbiór dokumentów (The Polish Question in the World War II International Arena. A Collection of Documents)*, Warszawa 1965, pp. 35–37.

²² W. Kozaczuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–152.

²³ C. Andrew, *op. cit.*, pp. 608–616; S. Payne-Best, *The Venlo Incident*, London 1970.

law Sikorski's visit in Great Britain, the Chief of the War Cabinet Neville Chamberlain proposed on November 16, 1939, that the Polish side organize sabotage in occupied Poland on the railway lines along which the Germans were going to ship oil from the USSR. However, the Polish leader had doubts about the possibility of such supplies, although he did not rule out the eventual armed action of the Polish underground movement²⁴.

The attempts of Polish intelligence and diplomacy to help the British ally were received with scepticism, especially if they concerned regions lying traditionally within the sphere of British interest, such as Central Asia. Although at the beginning of 1940 the British realised the weakness of their own intelligence in this area, yet they approached with reserve Polish proposals to conduct for their sake intelligence activity in Afghanistan by the Consulate of the Polish Republic in Kabul, since they were afraid of spoiling their relations with this country and doubted the Polish potentialities for success. This matter was solved propitiously only in the autumn of 1940²⁵.

The Winter War encouraged the Poles to take up the issue of an anti-Soviet Polish-British co-operation, also at the level of intelligence and sabotage. During his visit in London the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs August Zaleski in his talk with his British counterpart the Earl of Halifax offered Polish assistance in destroying Soviet petroleum installations in Transcaucasia by bombing from Syria or subversion. Halifax, admittedly, agreed as to the necessity to counteract the economic co-operation between Berlin and Moscow, but was sceptical about Great Britain's accession to the war against the USSR, being afraid of the dispersal of means in many directions²⁶.

²⁴ *Na najwyższym szczeblu. Spotkania premierów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Wielkiej Brytanii podczas II wojny światowej (At the Top Level. Meetings of the Premiers of the Republic of Poland and Great Britain During World War II)*, comp. M. K. Kamiński, J. Tebinka, Warszawa 1999, p. 2.

²⁵ PRO, FO 371/24845, N 1087/40/38, a note by F. Maclean of Feb. 2, 1940; FO 371/24769, N 1261/57/97, Lord Halifax to Kabul Jan. 27, 1940; FO 371/24769, N 1290/57/97, a note of Feb. 2, 1940.

²⁶ PRO, FO 371/24476, C 2171/510/55, Halifax-Zaleski talk of Feb. 8, 1940. Polish intelligence had long considered Transcaucasia with its mosaic of nations oppressed by Communism as the sore point of the USSR. On Feb. 21, 1940, the British chargé d'affaires in Bucharest Robin Hankey talked with an officer of Polish intelligence Maj. Wincenty Bączkiewicz about the possibility of anti-Soviet actions in the Caucasus, PRO, FO 371/24845, N 2574/40/38, a note by R. Hankey of Feb. 21, 1940.

The co-operation of British and Polish intelligence was precipitated by German war victories in the West in the spring of 1940. The defeat of France and the withdrawal of the British from the Continent also signified the loss of most of the SIS stations in Europe, except from the neutral countries, which anyway, had few officers. In this situation British co-operation with the secret service of those states whose governments found shelter in the British Isles in 1940 was the only chance for the reconstruction of intelligence potential in a Europe occupied by the third Reich. Of the British allies in the summer of 1940, the Polish Government had the greatest potential for action not only in the territory of conquered Poland but in other countries, France, Belgium, and North Africa as well. The first months of an intensified Polish and British intelligence co-operation were somewhat chaotic, the more so because the bilateral military agreement of August 5, 1940, did not regulate matters of co-operation in this delicate sphere. In his talks with General Sikorski on September 24 Prime Minister Churchill asked him for assistance in setting in order the relations between the SIS and its Polish counterpart. It was finally established that the representatives of both sides would discuss the problems of the co-operation of secret services. The Chiefs, SIS Brigadier Sir Steward Menzies and that of the Second Department, Col. Leon Mitkiewicz, met two days later in the company of the Personal Assistant to Churchill, Maj. Desmond Morton. It was agreed that all contacts concerning intelligence would be maintained with the British through the Polish Second Department²⁷. We still do not know whether a formal agreement between both secret services was signed; if this was the case, its content is not known. There can be no doubt, however, that the close co-operation of the intelligence of both countries initiated then consisted in the conveying into the British hands by the Second Department of practically all information on the potential of the Axis countries, and in the executing by this department of the tasks set by the SIS. In return British intelligence supported its Polish partner both in respect of organization, training and finances²⁸.

²⁷ *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej*, pp. 173–176; *Na najwyższym szczeblu*, pp. 9–10; PRO, PREM 7/6, a note by Morton of Sept. 26, 1940.

²⁸ L. Mitkiewicz, *Z generałem Sikorskim na obczyźnie. Fragmenty wspomnień (In Exile with General Sikorski. Fragments of Memories)*, Paryż 1969, pp. 100, 115.

The British side was fully aware of the potential problems aroused by the fact that there existed such a separate line of communication with Poland as Department VI of the Polish Commander-in-Chief's Staff²⁹. The British secret service also harboured some complications and controversy over their own competences, especially after Churchill's idea was implemented in July 1940 by calling into being the Special Operations Executive (SOE) whose task was to organize sabotage in countries under the German occupation. The SOE's co-operation with the Polish ZWZ (The Union of Armed Struggle) and later AK (The Home Army) developed on special principles. The Polish Underground State retained its organizational independence from the SOE, which fulfilled above all, a contact unit role³⁰.

At first the co-operation did not develop well. From August 1940 the SIS, SOE and British diplomacy involved themselves in an attempt to free former Minister Beck, who was interned in Rumania. Sikorski initially did not favour this plan, and when in October he thought it improper for the ex-minister of foreign affairs to fall into the German hands, he proposed to the British to intern him on Cyprus, if he succeeded in escaping from Rumania. However, the Polish government was saved the trouble, for the first attempt at Beck's escape in October 1940 failed, and preparations for another in December were broken by British intelligence after the Rumanian authorities seized the specially prepared ship near Constanța³¹.

292. Polish intelligence conveyed to the British a valuable source of information in the person of Halina Szymańska, wife of the Polish ex-attaché in Berlin Maj. Antoni Szymański. In December 1939 she came to Berne due to the assistance of Abwehra Chief Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, who passed on to her — when she was already an SIS agent — information on Hitler's plans. This took place during direct meetings or through the German Vice-Consul in Zurich, Hans Bernd Gisevius, see N. West, *SIS*, pp. 199–201; J. Garliński, *Szwajcarski korytarz (The Swiss Corridor)*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 90–103, 171–172, 194–195.

²⁹ PRO, PREM 7/6, a note by Morton of Sept. 26, 1940.

³⁰ J. Garliński, *Poland, SOE and the Allies*, London 1969; D. Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance 1940–1945. A Survey of the Special Operations Executive with Documents*, London 1980, pp. 139, 181–186.

³¹ PRO, FO 371/24474, C 8736/252/55, J. Le Rougetel (Bucharest) to FO Aug. 19, 1940, FO to R. Hoare Oct. 7, 1940; a note by Strang of Oct. 16, 1940, Hoare to FO Oct. 22 and Dec. 10, 1940; D. Rogoyski, *Plęć inicjatyw wydobywania Józefa Becka z pułapki rumuńskiej (Five Initiatives to Free Józef Beck from the Rumanian Trap)*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", 1986, fasc. 76, pp. 38–57.

In the fields of intelligence and sabotage the British and Polish secret services developed a close co-operation which lasted till the end of the war. However, as far as code-breaking was concerned the British preferred to rely on their own forces, although up till November 1942 they received information from the French-Polish Centre called Cadix, secretly active in the un-occupied part of France. However, work on deciphering the Enigma cables was exclusively handled by the GC&CS. London shared his secret of the Ultra, as this undertaking was called, only with the USA, by concluding in 1943 a secret agreement on the co-operation in the field of cryptology, called BRUSA, which was the nucleus of special intelligence ties between both countries, existing to this day³².

Information coming from the Polish side was of great importance to Great Britain's war strategy especially in the years 1941-1942, when the fatal results were still felt of British intelligence's neglect to penetrate Germany. Most data concerned the territory of occupied Poland, however the network of the Polish Second Department embraced the whole of Europe, among other countries Germany, France, Benelux and even North Africa, in the latter case playing an important role in preparing the "Torch" operation. In the spring of 1941 messages started reaching London, sent from the German-occupied part of Poland, about the concentration of German troops on the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. This information, together with data from other sources, above all Enigma, were used by Churchill and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden for warning the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in June 1941 against the advancing attack of the Third Reich, although the British themselves were not completely convinced of its inevitability, as they rather suspected Hitler of playing a diplomatic game³³.

The co-operation of Polish intelligence with the British, whose climax took place in 1941-1944, turned out to be largely unilateral. The Poles had no choice but to be purveyors of information, frequently, as in the case of V-2 rockets, invaluable.

³² R. Erskine, *The Holden Agreement on Naval Sigint: The First BRUSA?*, "Intelligence and National Security", vol. 14, 1999, № 2, pp. 187-197.

³³ *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 1, London 1986, pp. 438, 457-458, 482; A. Pełoński, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie 1939-1945 (Polish Armed Forces Intelligence in the West 1939-1945)*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 307-309.

They were also performers of sabotage operations, where the most valuable people perished (e.g. in "The Fan" action) whose purposefulness was doubtful, to say the least. There can be no doubt that the contribution of the Polish secret services, including the effort of the people of the Polish Underground State, to victory over the Third Reich was enormous and in its strategic dimension surpassed the considerable, to be sure, achievements of the Polish land forces, air forces and the navy³⁴.

Despite the alliance between Poland and Great Britain, of which the latter tried to release herself at least from 1943 onwards, as her policy of concessions to the USSR progressed, the British secret service systematically tried to gain as much information as possible on the design of its Polish ally. Poland was not an exception, although it did not gain such a high place on the British list of priorities as the Free Frenchmen, spied on by all means and measures. This was due above all to the permanent conflicts between Churchill and the French leader, General Charles de Gaulle. Polish-British political relations in the years 1940-1944 were marked by much openness on the part of Sikorski and his successor Stanisław Mikołajczyk, although this was not reciprocated by the British side.

We know nothing of the British sources of information among members of the Polish political establishment in London³⁵. However, one must be cautious and avoid rash accusations, whose victim was, e.g., Józef Retinger, Sikorski's adviser, suspected of serving the British intelligence. If he became a British agent, it must have been at a later date, since back in 1940 the Foreign Office ordered the British Embassy in Angers to get as much information as possible on this mysterious figure. During the war, too, he was the object of a through investigation by the SIS agents³⁶.

³⁴ In 1944 Polish intelligence conveyed to the British 7,351 reports with intelligence material, 966 reports with information of foreign intelligence agents and 29,510 reports of intelligence based on cryptological achievements, see A. Suchcitz, *Archiwa wywiadu polskiego po 1945 roku (Polish Intelligence Archives after 1945)*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", fasc. 89, 1989, p. 24.

³⁵ A collaborator of the SIS was Jan Horodyski, a person from Ignacy Paderewski's circle, who stayed in Switzerland during the Second World War. His connections with the British intelligence date back to First World War, see P. Howarth, *Intelligence Chief Extraordinary. The Life of the Ninth Duke of Portland*, London 1986, p. 126; R. Wapniński, *Ignacy Paderewski*, Wrocław 1999, p. 131.

³⁶ PRO, FO 371/24476, R. Makins to F. Savery May 9, 1940, Savery to Makins

An important source of information on the activity of Polish diplomacy was the interception of courier mail by the British. Already during the war the Polish Ambassador in Turkey suspected the British of opening his diplomatic correspondence, sent through them³⁷. As a result of these actions, as well as due to the deciphering of the Turkish codes, in the spring of 1942 British diplomacy had an almost complete picture of Polish efforts directed against the projected British alliance with the USSR, and could thus counteract them more easily³⁸.

Most probably the GC&CS did not break the Polish diplomatic code during the war. Its specialists only sporadically succeeded in deciphering telegrams transmitted in the code of Polish military attachés³⁹. We do not know whether this was a deliberate attack on this code, or rather the result of the routine checking of its safety. The British learned much more of Polish reactions due to breaking the diplomatic codes of other countries: China, Portugal, Japan, France, Spain, Bulgaria, and especially the above-mentioned Turkey. These telegrams were delivered to Churchill, who was their avid reader⁴⁰. However, these were not materials that would bring any essential elements to the knowledge of Polish intentions of which the British knew much more due to their direct contacts with Poles.

Thus intelligence sources did not play an essential role in the formation of the British policy on the Polish question. They were

May 16, 1940; HS 4/137, London Report of Dec. 16, 1942; FO 371/39452, C 10912/31/55, Cheney to F. Roberts Aug. 14, 1944. The latter, who at that time acted as a link between the SIS and the Foreign Office admitted, in his conversation with the present author, that Retinger frequently paid him visits and briefed him on Polish matters. At the same time Sir Frank Roberts refused to discuss issues of intelligence, although half a century elapsed since the events under discussion occurred; a talk with Sir Frank Roberts, London Feb. 20, 1995.

³⁷ M. Sokolnicki, *Dziennik Ankaraki 1939–1943 (The Ankara Diary 1939–1943)*, Londyn 1965, p. 368. The fact that the courier mail of Polish diplomacy was intercepted is confirmed by K. Phlly, *op. cit.*, p. 38. The disclosed British documents include a report by Jan Ciechanowski, Polish Ambassador in Washington, on the first conference in Quebec, PRO, HW 1/1988, Menzies to Churchill Sept. 7, 1943, Jan Ciechanowski's letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Romer of Sept. 1, 1943.

³⁸ J. Tebinka, *op. cit.*, pp. 195–196.

³⁹ PRO, HW 1/452, Menzies to Churchill March 27, 1942, an intercepted telegram from Bronislaw Noël (Polish military attaché in Berne) to the Staff of the Polish Commander-in-Chief, March 24, 1942. This telegram informed of the movements of German troops and their losses at the Eastern front.

⁴⁰ See PRO file HW 1.

frequently inadequate, because of the lack or insufficient information. After the Katyń affair broke out, the Ambassador of Great Britain in the Polish Government Owen O'Malley prepared the so-called first report, blaming the NKVD, not on the basis of information of intelligence provenance, but of open German materials, and Polish data provided with the clause of top secrecy only because Sikorski's government did not want to present the problem to the public before April 13, 1943⁴¹.

The British secret services were especially curious to know details of rivalry within the Polish government and actions of the opposition directed against Sikorski, and later Mikołajczyk. They soon succeeded in gaining information about the mortal disease of Polish President Władysław Raczkiewicz, who opposed the policy of concessions to the USSR, thus turning Churchill against him. The British premier spoke to his ministers almost regretfully about Raczkiewicz on December 5, 1944: "More than three years ago we had been told that he would not live more than 6 months"⁴². However, Raczkiewicz did not fulfil these expectations and died only in 1947.

Most sensational, however, was the death of Polish Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski in Gibraltar on July 4, 1943. Various kinds of sensation seekers found for scandal in the logically contradictory British communiqué, which denied the possibility of sabotage, but did not indicate the reasons for the aircrash. Without entering into a detailed polemic it is worth recalling that it was Goebbels's propaganda which first accused Churchill and British intelligence of causing Sikorski's death, despite the fact that nobody but the British were most intent on having the Polish prime minister live as long as possible. In 1947 Brigadier Figg

⁴¹ *The Katyń Massacre: an SOE Perspective*, History Notes, № 10, London 1996; after Malley finished his report, the SOE gained a report from Prof. Tramsen, a Dane, who was a member of the International Commission called into being by the Germans upon the discovery of graves in Katyń. Tramsen's private opinions also pointed to the year 1940 as the time of the murder of the Polish officers, see PRO, HS 4/212, SOE Stockholm to SOE July 1, 1943; H. Tramsen, *Wrażenia z podróży do Katyń w 1943 roku (Impressions of a Trip to Katyń in 1943)*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", fasc. 87, 1989, pp. 155–157.

⁴² *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940–1945*, ed. B. Pimlott, London 1986, p. 812. A lot of information on internal rivalry came from postal and telegraph censorship, although the Polish issue has been almost completely omitted in the official history of the British postal censorship during World War II recently rendered accessible, see PRO, DEFE 1/333, History of the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department 1938–1946, vol. I–II.

from the Air Ministry in his internal report ruled out the possibility of sabotage, asseverating that a specialist would have to spend several hours on board the *Liberator*, in order to damage it so that the plane would take off, and then fall into the sea⁴³.

The British secret services proved to be effective in gaining information about their own allies, with the exception of the USSR. During the Second World War they ignored the far-reaching Soviet intelligence penetration to which they fell victim. Moscow's greatest success was placing five agents: Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt, Donald Burgess and John Cairncross in the sensitive points of the British apparatus of power, above all intelligence and diplomacy. The results of their work turned out to be fatal for the security not only of Great Britain. Also the interests of the Polish Government in Exile suffered, since these agents conveyed to their Soviet supervisors materials concerning British-Polish relations, account of bilateral talks, and, what is most important, documents serving to define London's policy towards the Polish question. Due to John Cairncross, who from September 1940 to March 1942 was secretary to Lord Hankey, chancellor of Lancaster Duchy, Soviet intelligence received at least some part of the minutes of the War Cabinet and memoranda submitted for its sessions, including Foreign Office documents⁴⁴. From 1944 onwards, Burgess worked at the News Department of this ministry, where he had access to documents concerning Poland. After the Yalta Con-

⁴³ *Sikorski: Soldier and Statesman*, ed. by K. Sw ord, London 1990, pp. 171-209; PRO, FO 371/66268, N 8650/7930/55, memorandum by Brigadier L. C. W. Figg of July 3, 1947. Years later the theory of the responsibility of British secret services for Sikorski's death surfaced again in a simpler form, saying that Kim Philby, the chief of the SIS counter-espionage section on the Iberian Peninsula, in fact an agent of Soviet intelligence, was responsible for damaging the airplane, see e.g. S. Ż o c h o w s k i, *Wywiad polski we Francji 1940-1945. Niektóre sprawy polsko-brytyjskie (Polish Intelligence in France 1940-1945. Some Polish-British Matters)*, London 1990, p. 140. However, Philby was not a James Bond type of agent, but rather a functionary with a desk job. He had never run a spy ring, except for screening his colleagues from the Cambridge Ring; the supposition that he would have had to commit an act of sabotage on board the *Liberator* on his own seems absurd.

⁴⁴ C. Andrew, O. Gordievsky, *KGB. The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev*, London 1990, pp. 210-211, 226; H. Dryder, *Recollections of Bletchley Park, France and Cairo*, in: *Codebreakers. The Inside Story of Bletchley Park*, ed. F. H. Hinsley, A. Stripp, Oxford 1993, p. 208. For examples of Blunt's and Philby's reports see N. West, O. Tsarev, *The Crown Jewels. The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives*, London 1998, pp. 279-345.

ference, Moscow received from him and from Donald Maclean in the Embassy of Great Britain in Washington, e.g. the content of Foreign Office instructions for the British Ambassador in the USSR, Archibald Clark Kerr, on negotiations concerning the creation of the Polish Temporary Government of National Unity⁴⁵. No wonder Stalin and his chief of diplomacy Vyacheslav Molotov could act in Teheran and Yalta as if they knew the plans of the Western Powers. One should not overestimate, however, the importance of the NKVD penetration of the British secret services and diplomacy, for surrendering Poland to the Soviet sphere of influence. This was mainly due to the successes of the Red Army and political errors of Churchill and Roosevelt, although without the assistance of the Cambridge Spy Ring this would have been more difficult.

The dismissal of Stanisław Mikołajczyk's government on November 24, 1944, was the beginning of the decline of the cooperation between the intelligence of Great Britain and Poland. This was the result of the reserve with which Churchill treated the next Cabinet headed by Tomasz Arciszewski. Political problems found their reflection in British attempts to deprive the Poles of the right to use the codes known exclusively to them, for their communication with their homeland. On the other hand, with the progress of the allies, their victories and the occupation of a part of Poland by the Red Army, the area diminished where the secret services of both countries could co-operate against the Germans.

Regardless of Churchill's earnest expectations that the Yalta agreements would ensure at least the shadow of a chance for Poland's independence, such illusions were not shared by the SIS, and especially the Polish Section of the SOE, where still before the end of the war plans were being prepared to use the Polish resistance movement in the case of a war with the USSR. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) — an institution which co-ordinated the co-operation of all British secret services, in its memorandum of December 18, 1944, came to the conclusion that the USSR, in order to improve its safety, intended to include its

⁴⁵ Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, ed. by N. Nicolson, London 1970, p. 435. For Philby's report see N. West, O. Tsarev, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

neighbour European states in its sphere of influence, which signified Poland's subordination to the Soviet Union⁴⁶.

The recognition by Great Britain and the USA on July 5, 1945, of the Polish Temporary Government of National Unity, headed by Edward Osóbka-Morawski, and in fact by the communists, put an official end to the co-operation of British and Polish intelligence. The SIS took over from the last head of Department II, Colonel Stanisław Gano, a part of the most important archives of Polish intelligence, and, as it can be surmised, also its networks⁴⁷.

In the middle of July 1945 the British Embassy in Warsaw was opened again, which signified the resumption of the work of the SIS station⁴⁸. It was supported by the network of British consular offices created in the years 1945–1946 in Gdańsk, Szczecin, Poznań, Łódź and Katowice. After the failure of the experiment to conceal SIS officers as Passport Control Office functionaries, this time they reappeared, just as it happened later in other countries, in the role of diplomats protected by immunity, although this did not exclude some actions without this protection, to say nothing of the constant use made of the British scholars, scientists, journalists and businessmen who visited Poland, for intelligence purposes.

The years 1945–1946 were a transitory period of British–Polish relations. The British were interested to what extent the Temporary Government of National Unity would implement the Yalta agreements concerning the free elections, and whether it would keep the promises made during the Potsdam Conference about the observance of democratic principles, including the freedom of the press and religion. Of less importance was the gaining of information on the military–economic potential of Poland, as well as the Soviet troops stationed in her territory. Some testimony to the fact that the British attached importance to the situation in Poland and followed the political events there was the appointment of Victor Cavendish Bentinck as first post–

⁴⁶ M. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 110; PRO, FO 371/47860, N 678/20/38, memo JIC (44) 467 of Dec. 18, 1944.

⁴⁷ The Second Department was formally dissolved in March 1946, see A. Suchcitz, *op. cit.*, p. 26–29.

⁴⁸ Its employees were most probably the first and third secretaries of the Embassy, Michael Winch and Lewis Massey. Alan Banks, the Vice-Consul in Warsaw, served in the SIS during the war in West Africa.

war British Ambassador to Poland⁴⁹. As Chairman of the JIC during the war Bentinck was in fact one of the top figures of the British secret services.

In Poland, increasingly subordinated to the USSR, the secret service discarded all its false pretences, although in public life attempts were made to keep up the appearances of normality. It was built on the Soviet model, based on Soviet cadres and strict subordination to Moscow. However, the Labour Government of Great Britain did not intend to take action aimed at the abolition of the communist regime imposed on Poland. Premier Clement Atlee, having learnt at the beginning of 1946 of the assistance given to the Polish anti-communist underground movement by the Second Corps, headed by Gen. Władysław Anders and stationed in Italy, firmly forbade that type of action⁵⁰. Labour Party did not intend to make use of the SOE, and especially its Polish section, in the event of a war with the USSR and finally dissolved this organization in 1946, and included its remnants in the SIS.

The secret services of Communist Poland, in the form of Security Office (*UB*) and Military Information were not restrained in their actions, as far as intelligence was concerned, the more so, because the Soviet Union gave top priority in its interests to Great Britain. Yet, because of the weakness of its organization the Polish intelligence service played only a subsidiary role to the *NKVD* in spying of the British, and was mainly interested in the Polish emigrants, perceived as a threat to the Communist authorities⁵¹.

⁴⁹ See Cavendish-Bentinck biography by his subordinate, P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, London 1986. Cavendish-Bentinck was not the only British ambassador in Warsaw after World War II to have close connections with intelligence. George Clutton (ambassador 1960–1966) in 1952–55 served as Foreign Office Adviser in the SIS; his function consisted in accepting and supervising the secret actions of this organization, see B. Page, D. Leitch, P. Knightley, *Philby. The Spy who Betrayed a Generation*, London 1977, p. 303. Thomas Brimelow (ambassador 1966–1969) is described as an SIS member in one of the most valuable works on the organization of British diplomacy, see G. Moorhouse, *The Diplomats. The Foreign Office Today*, London 1977, p. 127. George Norman Reddaway (ambassador 1974–1978) was a high functionary in the Information Research Department (1956–1960), who could use intelligence information for the secret inspiration of anti-communist publications.

⁵⁰ PRO, FO 800/490, Attlee to Bevin, Jan. 18, 1946.

⁵¹ The work of the British section of Communist intelligence and the station of Polish Security Service (*UB*) in London in 1947–1949 is presented by K. Starzyński, its functionary, in his memories, *Uśpiiony agent (A Dormant Agent)*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 49–70. He stayed in London as a *UB* officer under the cover

In the post-war period British diplomacy and intelligence were interested in Poland not only because they watched the implementation of the Yalta agreements. London was anxious about the fact of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust in Poland or returned there from the USSR. The pogroms of the Jewish population additionally encouraged the exodus of Polish Jews to Palestine, which, combined with the influx of Jews from other parts of Europe, threatened to exacerbate a conflict with the Arabs that the British wanted to avoid at all costs. British diplomats and intelligence cadres tried to collect information about the routes along which the Jews from Poland illegally immigrated to Palestine⁵².

The elections envisaged by the Yalta agreements took place in Poland only in January 1947, when even the greatest optimists in London could not expect they would meet the hopes of the Western Powers. Nevertheless the Embassy functionaries of Great Britain and the USA, including those involved in intelligence, created special groups that observed the way the elections were carried out all over Poland. The effects of this observation left no doubt as to the rigging of the elections, what resulted in the elimination of the Polish Peasant Party (*PSL*)⁵³.

of an employee of the Commercial Adviser's Bureau and fled in 1949. His direct superior was Marcel Reich-Ranicki, who later left Poland and settled in the FRG, gaining renown as an outstanding literary critic. The fact that in 1991 Starzyński disclosed his past as an agent did not undermine Reich-Ranicki's position.

⁵² PRO, FO 371/57689, N 3555/34/55, Cavendish-Bentinck to Bevin, March 14, 1946; WR 855/3/48, Miznacki Federation to FO, March 18, 1946.

⁵³ PRO, FO 371/66091, N 1440/6/55, Cavendish-Bentinck to Bevin, Jan. 29, 1947. Before the elections, on Jan. 14, 1947, a death sentence was executed on Count Ksawery Grocholski, accused of collaboration with the Gestapo and of being a link between the Embassy of Great Britain and the illegal organization *WiN* (Freedom and Independence). He was suspected of conveying secret information to the employees of the British Embassy, including Cavendish-Bentinck himself. The trial and accusations made against the ambassador himself thwarted British efforts to help carry out free elections in Poland. The ambassador had known Grocholski since 1919 and, indeed, received from him materials on the situation in Poland, e.g. *WiN* publications, but according to Cavendish-Bentinck they contained no secret information. PRO, FO 371/66153, N 1418/143/55, a Polish note of Jan. 31, 1947; N 1628/143/55, Cavendish-Bentinck to FO Feb. 6, 1947; N 2035/143/55, Cavendish-Bentinck to Hankey Feb. 11, 1947. As a result of the whole affair Cavendish-Bentinck finished prematurely his diplomatic mission in Poland, see W. Borodziej, *Od Poczdamu do Szklarskiej Poręby. Polska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1945-1947* (From Potsdam to Szklarska Poręba. Poland in International Relations 1945-1947), Londyn 1990, pp. 187-188.

Because of the political defeat of Stanisław Mikołajczyk, who was encouraged by the previous British Government to come to an understanding with the Communists and to return to Poland, the British faced the dilemma: how to save the Polish ex-premier from the threat of a show-trial. At the request of Tadeusz Romer, Mikołajczyk's collaborator who did not return to Poland with him, the British ex-premier Winston Churchill turned to the Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin on September 19, 1947, inquiring about the Polish ex-premier's safety. However, the Foreign Office received contradictory signals and satisfied itself with sending on September 30, 1947, a letter to Józef Cyrankiewicz, the prime minister of the Warsaw Cabinet, warning him against any attempt to arrest the PSL leader⁵⁴. Following a long period of uncertainty, on October 17, 1947, Mikołajczyk asked USA Embassy to help him to escape. As a result of their co-operation with British diplomats, supposedly SIS officers, the ex-premier of the Polish Government in Exile was secretly taken to Gdynia by a lorry belonging to the British Embassy, and embarked on the ship "Baltavia" sailing under the British flag. The escape was a success and Mikołajczyk reached London five days later⁵⁵. This was certainly a big set-back to the Communist secret services, so acute that years later they tried to create the impression that the Communist regime deliberately did not stop Mikołajczyk from escaping, because it did not want to bring him to trial⁵⁶.

The putsch of Prague, and especially the beginning of the blockade of Berlin by Stalin in 1948 left no doubt that the USSR and its satellite countries were enemies of Great Britain and a serious threat to her safety. The gaining of information on the development by the Russian of nuclear, biological, and chemical

⁵⁴ PRO, FO 371/66095, N 10485/6/55, F. Savery to R. Hankey, Sept. 6, 1947; N 11254/6/55, Churchill to Bevin, Sept. 19, 1947, Bevin to Churchill, Sept. 30, 1947.

⁵⁵ *Ucieczka Mikołajczyka z PRL w 1947 roku (Mikołajczyk's Escape from the Polish People's Republic in 1947)*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", fasc. 74, 1985, pp. 149–157; S. Dorril, *MI6. Fifty Years of Special Operations*, London 2000, pp. 260–261. Although the Department of State disclosed the involvement of American and British diplomats in the organization of Mikołajczyk's escape, the telegrams concerning this matter, exchanged between the British Embassy in Warsaw and the Foreign Office, are still inaccessible to researchers.

⁵⁶ *Siedem rozmów z generałem dywizji Władysławem Pożogą, I zastępcą ministra spraw wewnętrznych, szefem wywiadu i kontrwywiadu (Seven Talks with Div. Gen. Władysław Pożoga, 1st Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chief of Intelligence and Security Service)*, carried out by H. Piecuch, Warszawa 1987, pp. 147–148.

weapons, as well as new kinds of conventional weapons became a priority for British intelligence, as was the matter of an early warning against a possible Soviet attack. On the contrary, the armed forces of the Soviet satellite countries were not of special interest⁵⁷. Knowledge of the internal situation in Poland, especially its social aspect, was, however, important in view of Western hopes that anti-Russian Poles would not want to be excessively loyal to the new authorities.

At the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, in the most dangerous period of the Cold War, the intelligence service of Western Powers had limited possibilities to penetrate the Communist countries. In 1948 the British and the Americans concluded a new agreement about their co-operation in the field of Sigint intelligence, called UKUSA. The literature of this subject accepts that they were not able, however, in the face of the USSR and its satellite countries, to score cryptological successes comparable with Enigma. This fact remains true, despite the partial deciphering at the end of the 1940s and in the 1950s, of several thousand old telegrams sent by the NKVD and the GRU during the Second World War⁵⁸. The Polish issues brought to light at that time were only of historical importance. Nevertheless British and American specialists sporadically succeeded in breaking various codes used in People's Poland, which is testified by the telegrams preserved in the National Archives in Washington, as well as the warnings sent from the USSR to Warsaw that some Polish codes were not safe⁵⁹.

There were very limited opportunities for a photographic reconnaissance carried out during RAF flights with passengers to Poland. At the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s British reconnaissance airplanes made also some illegal flights over Poland, taking advantage of Polish radar network. Such actions were frequent during missions whose target was the

⁵⁷ *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain 1945–1970*, ed. by R. Aldrich, Manchester 1998, pp. 40–42.

⁵⁸ J. Ranelagh, *The Agency. The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, London 1988, pp. 147–149; *Venona. Soviet Espionage and the American Response 1939–1957*, ed. by R. L. Benson, M. Warner, Laguna Hills 1996.

⁵⁹ The Central Archives of Modern Records, Warszawa (henceforward: CAMR), PZPR, XIA/71, N. Khrushchev to B. Bierut 1954 (without day number); D. Alvarez, *Behind Venona: American Signals Intelligence in the Early Cold War "Intelligence and National Security"*, vol. 14, 1999, № 2, pp. 179–186.

much more interesting area of the USSR. It is not known whether in the Stalinist period British intelligence succeeded in enlisting the co-operation of any people in the top positions of Communist power. Considering the general political atmosphere, it seems rather improbable. After 1945 the British intelligence service made use of some post-Home Army (AK) networks; these, however, were gradually broken up by the Communist secret services. At the end of the 1940s the activity of British intelligence in Poland became more and more difficult because of the prevailing spy-mania in the country. Poland in this respect started to resemble the USSR, where any contact with a foreigner was seen by the authorities as suspect, and could lead to imprisonment. British diplomatic and consular offices were closely watched and their telephone lines tapped by the Security Office (UB), which also followed the movements of diplomats in Poland and supervised Poles who came in contact with them. The Communist secret services tried at the same time, often by blackmail, to recruit agents from Poles employed in subsidiary posts in the British Embassy in Warsaw and other diplomatic offices⁶⁰. Also British diplomats were their targets, although none of them was exposed later as a Polish agent.

It was a considerable surprise to the British secret services when on June 5, 1949, the head of the British Council in Poland, George Bidwell, decided to quit his job and become a Polish citizen. This was, however, not the result of efforts made by the Polish Security Office, but rather the outcome of the refugee's ideological persuasions and his love affair. Nevertheless, he was the first British functionary to defect to the Communist side, two years before Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess fled to Moscow. Bidwell's escape caused anxiety in London, since he took part in the debates of the Embassy's employees who discussed confidential matters. British espionage and counter-espionage had to assume that all his knowledge, also about the Embassy personnel (he could easily identify the SIS officers, since he had already lived in Poland for three years), had become accessible to the Polish Security Office (UB)⁶¹. At a special debate in London on June 10,

⁶⁰ British Ambassador in Poland (1969–1972) Nicholas Henderson describes a funny story about his Dalmatian dog biting the leg of a Polish cleaner searching his private apartment, see N. Henderson, *Mandarin. The Diaries of an Ambassador 1969–1982*, London 1995, pp. 14–15.

1949, with the participation of high Foreign Office functionaries, MI5 and SIS, it was decided to order the heads of the diplomatic offices in Communist countries to survey their cadres from the point of view of potential defectors, so as to be able, if need be, to move them to other countries⁶².

Despite British fears the example of Bidwell was not infectious. After the Second World War what made people co-operate with the secret services of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries was above all money, and not faith in Communist ideology. At the beginning of 1952 the Polish Security Office succeeded in enlisting not a diplomat, admittedly, but an employee of the maritime attaché's office of the British Embassy in Warsaw, Harry Houghton, who was given the cryptonym Miron. Despite his low official rank, he provided Moscow via the Polish Security Office (*UB*) with valuable information concerning the activity of the Royal Navy Intelligence, delivering to them over 1,000 documents at the peak of his activity in Warsaw in August 1952. After moving to Great Britain in October that year, Houghton took up work in the centre of research into submarine weapons in Portland. However, since then he was supervised by the Russians, who controlled him for the next four years under the so-called "false flag", i.e. pretending they were the Polish Security Office (*UB*)⁶³.

The fiasco of the British and American operation of rousing a revolt in Albania at the beginning of the 1950s, betrayed by Philby, but from its outset doomed to failure, was accompanied by a still more disgraceful defeat in Poland. On December 27, 1952, the authorities of People's Poland disclosed that the secret services of the USA and Great Britain tried to stir up a revolt in Poland. This put an end to *UB* provocation, continuing since 1948, and consisting in the creation of the so-called 5th General Board of the Freedom and Independence Union (*WiN*). The main western partner of this fake agency was the American Office of Policy Co-ordination (*OPC*), which provided "Polish anti-communists" with technical and financial means surpassing 1 million

⁶¹ PRO, FO 371/77498A, N 5027/1055/55, Gainer to FO June 5, 1949; N 5028/1055/55, a note by A. Meyer of June 7, 1949.

⁶² PRO, FO 371/77388, N 5237/1052/6, record of the meeting June 10, 1949 in FO.

⁶³ N. West, O. Tsarev, *op. cit.*, pp. 256–266.

dollars. We do not know what was the dimension of the British contribution to this abortive undertaking, but it seems that the SIS played here a secondary role, in contrast to a similar secret action in the Ukraine, in which the secret services of Anglo-Saxon powers also suffered a set-back, although not so spectacular⁶⁴.

British intelligence turned out to be much more effective in making it difficult for Poland and other Communist countries to import raw materials (among others copper) and equipment of strategic value⁶⁵. On the other hand, in the first half of the 1950s the intelligence of People's Poland encountered considerable difficulties in their attempts to penetrate Western intelligence head offices. Communication problems seriously hindered the development of Polish intelligence agencies abroad. The work with the Polish emigrants in Great Britain was much more successful than that with the British citizens; this resulted in some successes in the repatriation campaign, e.g. the premier in exile Hugon Hanke (actually a Polish Security Service (*UB*) agent) returned to Poland in September 1955. The repatriation campaign conducted by the USSR and its satellite countries even earlier aroused the anxiety of the JIC, who feared it would disturb the British operation of inducing persons with valuable information to flee from the Communist bloc and diplomatic posts. It was accepted with relief, however, that the proposal of return was not directed to recent refugees⁶⁶. The diplomacy and intelligence of

⁶⁴ Z. Woźniczka, *Zrzeszenie "Wolność i Niezawisłość" 1945–1952 (The "Freedom and Independence" Union 1945–1952)*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 107–123; B. Page, D. Leitch, P. Knightley, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–221; S. Dorril, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–267.

⁶⁵ Although in 1947 Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR received penicillin producing plants within the framework of UNRRA relief, a year later Moscow's endeavours to acquire a new generation plant aroused the suspicion of the JIC that the Russians, regardless of the costs, wanted to acquire it for producing biological weapons, see PRO, CAB 158/3, JIC (48)24, memorandum of March 6, 1948. However, only in 1953 did the SIS create a special department concerned with breaking the embargo on the export of strategic materials to the Communist countries. Apart from copper, they endeavoured to stop the export of aluminium, diamonds and products of electromechanical industry as well as electronic parts, see D. Bristow, B. Bristow, *A Game of Moles. The Deception of an SIS Officer*, London 1993, pp. 234–248. See also J. Chmurkowski, *Embargo strategiczne (The Strategic Embargo)*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 68–96.

⁶⁶ CAMR, PZPR 1680, A Report of the Committee for Public Security of May 26, 1956; PRO, CAB 158/21, JIC (55)55, memorandum of Aug. 17, 1955. To save the ex-functionaries of the Polish People's Republic's secret services from the temptation to return to their homeland or from being threatened by their recent employers, they were resettled outside of Europe to Australia or the Ocean Islands,

People's Poland, for propaganda purposes, were interested above all in war-time emigrés — people from the world of culture, less frequently politics⁶⁷.

The British secret services, while analysing the information they collected about Poland, also sought for the weakest points in its military infrastructure. This was done mainly by the military attachés in Warsaw, who on behalf of particular branches of the British Army toured Poland making maps, photographs and descriptions of the military and civil establishments they were interested in. The JIC memorandum of January 26, 1955, said that in the case of war, of crucial importance to the Soviet Army would be railway transport in the territory of Poland; they proposed to paralyse it by atomic bomb attacks at the 50 most important railway junctions⁶⁸. The perspective of such a war was then, however, more distant than a few years earlier. British intelligence did not play a significant role in the attempts at a reevaluation of London's policy towards Poland, initiated in 1955 by the British Ambassador in Warsaw Andrew Noble, who turned out to be much more far-sighted than the Foreign Office and the secret services, in predicting the direction in which the policy of the Communists would evolve in Poland.

The October events of 1956 were closely watched by the British. Due to information gained by the British Commander-in-Chief's Mission to the Soviet Forces of Occupation in Germany (BRIXMIS), operating in the territory of the GDR and engaged in an intense espionage, the British secret services could provide diplomacy with almost hour-by-hour reports on the movement of the Soviet troops concentrated on the Polish border for the purpose of an armed intervention, up till the moment when the decision was changed and the troops returned to their barracks⁶⁹.

see K. Starzyński, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ More extensively, see A. Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji (The political Life of the Emigré Community)*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 232–241. On the propaganda aspect of the struggle for the refugees' souls see S. Kerr, *British Cold War Defectors: the Versatile, Durable Toys of Propagandists*, in: *British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War, 1945–51*, ed. by R. J. Aldrich, London 1992.

⁶⁸ PRO, CAB 158/20, JIC (55)15, memorandum of Jan. 26, 1955.

⁶⁹ Only in 1997 was a part of intelligence reports made public, PRO, FO 371/122599, NP 10110/150, BRIXMIS to FO Oct. 22, 1956; NP 10110/153, Berthoud (Warsaw) to FO Oct. 22, 1956; NP 10110/156, BRIXMIS to FO Oct. 23, 1956; NP 10110/160, BRIXMIS to FO Oct. 24, 1956; NP 10110/179, BRIXMIS to FO Oct. 26, 1956. More extensively on the actions of the mission and preparations

British intelligence aptly assessed Władysław Gomułka, on his coming to power, as “a diehard Communist”. On the other hand the British were aware of the opportunities that opened for their policy due to the creation in Poland of what they called a “national Communist regime”⁷⁰.

The political thaw and the extension of freedoms in Poland made it easier for the Western secret services to operate in its territory, than was the case in the Stalinist era. In 1958 a high ranking officer of the Polish Security Service (SB) — acting under the cryptonym “Noddy” (after the name of a children’s film hero) — established contact with the British Embassy in Warsaw, and unexposed for a decade to come became one of the most important agents for British intelligence behind the Iron Curtain. In 1960 the British already received information from three SB officers⁷¹. Thanks to them they could control the intelligence activity of the Polish secret services in Great Britain and outside it. A serious blow to the latter was the escape of the high ranking intelligence functionary, Colonel Michał Goleniewski, on January 4, 1961, to a CIA station in West Berlin. Thanks to information gained from him British counter-intelligence exposed a valuable Soviet agent, SIS officer George Blake, and discovered the spy ring operating in the Royal Navy base in Portland, whose essential source of information was Houghton⁷².

In the middle 1960s the relations between British and Polish intelligence, despite enmity and rivalry, underwent a relative normalization in comparison to Stalinist times. There were fewer incidents of provocation, although attempts were made to gain as much information as possible on the enemy; this despite the fact that both countries’ diplomats tried to impose on their

of the Soviet Army in the GDR for intervention in Poland in the years 1980–1981 see T. Geraghty, *BRIXMIS. The Untold Exploits of Britain’s Most Daring Cold War Spy Mission*, London 1996, pp. 232–234.

⁷⁰ PRO, CAB 159/25, JIC (56)97th meeting Oct. 25, 1956.

⁷¹ T. Bower, *The Perfect English Spy. Sir Dick White and the Secret War 1935–90*, London 1995, pp. 255–256, 332, 350. “Noddy” was directed among others by the British diplomat Colin Figures, in fact an SIS officer, and later the director of this institution. In 1968 the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) concluded there was a highly positioned spy in their department, but was unable to unmask him. In the course of an investigation they discovered a group of officers involved in a large-scale smuggling of gold, see J. S. Mac, *Przesłuchanie supergliny (The Examination of a Super-cop)*, Warszawa 1990, p. 74.

⁷² D. E. Murphy, S. A. Kondrashev, G. Bailey, *Battleground Berlin. CIA vs. KGB in the Cold War*, Yale 1997, pp. 343–346; S. Dorril, *op. cit.*, p. 704.

bilateral relations the character of a platform for understanding between two hostile blocs. The failures of Polish intelligence in Britain were caused not only by "Noddy's" defection. After Blake was exposed, Moscow lost the possibility to warn its satellite countries against SIS actions, something it had been practically able to do over the entire post-war period. After 1960 we do not know of a single collaborator of so high a rank as Blake, recruited from among the SIS or MI5 officers by the services of the Warsaw Pact countries. The co-operation between the Polish Security Service (SB) and the Polish Board of the 2nd General Staff and their Soviet counterparts after 1956 did not run as smoothly as previously, when the secret services of People's Poland constituted the extension of the NKVD and GRU. This does not mean there was no co-operation, but the Russians clearly favoured the intelligence of Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia in their common undertakings in the British Isles. The KGB was reluctant to share with the services of its fraternal countries the data gained by their intelligence as a result of breaking the codes of the NATO countries⁷³.

Due to the information from "Noddy", British counter-espionage possessed a strong asset in thwarting the actions of the Polish secret services in Great Britain. However, this did not mean the activity of the latter was completely eliminated, the more so because the small forces of the MI5 had to deal with numerous diplomatic and commercial personnel of Warsaw Pact countries, which concealed a sizeable group of intelligence officers. Much more successful than in the field of military and diplomatic espionage, was Polish intelligence in stealing modern technology for the needs of the army and economy. This business was caused by the Western strategic embargo, but also by a wish to economize on the purchase of licences. The British were also well aware that the authorities of People's Poland made an instrumental use of the British Council scholarship programme, by sending to the academic centres in the British Isles above all the researchers into the technical sciences, and not humanists, in order to gain by all possible means information which could be put to use in Poland's technologically backward economy⁷⁴.

⁷³ C. Andrew, V. Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield. The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*, New York 1999, pp. 351–352.

⁷⁴ The British Council data show that out of 20 candidates proposed by the Polish

The Warsaw SIS station turned out to be the hatchery of the future chiefs of this institution. Side by side with Figures, it employed Colin McColl, whose name as the director of the SIS was revealed in 1992, for the first time in history, by premier John Major. McColl was one of the officers who were not exposed by the Polish Security Service (SB). He directed Adam Kaczmarzyk, a radiotelegraphic operator from the Radio Communication Reception Centre of the Polish Ministry of National Defence, who in 1965–1967, as a British agent, conveyed to the SIS important information on the codes of the Polish Army and the forces of the Warsaw Pact, making it possible for the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) to intercept their communication⁷⁵.

The decline of Władysław Gomułka's rule was not a surprise to British diplomacy and intelligence, although they did not foresee the student upheavals in March 1968. However, London did not attach much importance to student protests and the unleashing of the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland. These events had little bearing upon the relations between the two countries. At that time the British focussed their hopes for a peaceful liberalization on the rapidly-progressing transformations in Czechoslovakia. However, the Labour Government did not intend to conduct secret operations in Czechoslovakia in order to support its reformers, being afraid of provocation and of providing counter-arguments to the propaganda of the other countries of the Warsaw Pact, hostile towards Prague Spring. Regardless of the above-mentioned successes of British intelligence in its fight against the secret services of Communist countries, it was completely surprised by the sudden invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR, Poland, the GDR, Hungary and Bulgaria on the night of August 20, 1968, and did not give any warnings to the political decision-makers. Nor did the British secret services know how to react over the next few days, to the alarming, and as it later turned

authorities for scholarships of this organization in 1968 as many as 90% were candidates not connected with humanities, see PRO, FCO 28/298, NP 17/1, British Council memorandum of July 25, 1968.

⁷⁵ Another SIS officer who directed Kaczmarzyk, Barrie Ganey, was expelled by the Polish authorities directly after the spy's arrest, see M. Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha. The Inside Story of British Intelligence*, London 1997, pp. 99–101. Kaczmarzyk turned out to be extremely careless, spending enormous sums in Warsaw's restaurants, which made him easy to discover. According to the Security Service officer who directed his case, the signal of a leak came from Moscow.

out false, news from Washington, about the USSR's intention to attack Rumania and remove its dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu, who was against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and also had distanced himself from Moscow's many other actions abroad⁷⁶.

At the end of the 1960s the intelligence services of the Warsaw Pact countries made up for the lack of their spectacular successes in the British Isles by increasing the numbers of their intelligence personnel, who active as diplomats, businessmen and journalists made aggressive attempts to recruit collaborators. In October 1968 the British Home Office estimated the number of Soviet intelligence officers, operating from Soviet diplomatic offices in London, at 137. The letter of Home Office to Foreign Office of October 10, 1968, suggesting steps to be taken to curtail such an extensive Russian intelligence activity, also said that the diplomatic personnel of other European Communist countries consisted to a large extent of intelligence officers, although no precise data were given. In this case, however, no suggestion was made to reduce the number of diplomats, since in some Communist countries the British were represented by their larger number and an eventual expulsion of intelligence officers would be more costly for the SIS⁷⁷. Finally the Foreign Office and the British secret services did not decide to expel the intelligence officers of the Soviet satellite countries from England on a mass scale; they merely satisfied themselves with the expulsion of three employees of the Polish Embassy from Great Britain in January 1970. After almost three years of warnings, on September 24, 1971, the Foreign Office demanded that 105 Soviet diplomats leave Great Britain, accusing them of activity discordant with their official status. The scale of this expulsion dealt a blow to KGB and GRU operations in the British Isles, after which these organizations would not recover till the downfall of the USSR. In

⁷⁶ D. Owen, *Time to Declare*, London 1991, p. 132; T. Bower, *op. cit.*, p. 363; PRO, FCO 28/57, N2/35, UKDEL NATO to FO, Aug. 31, 1968; Washington to FO, Aug. 31, 1968.

⁷⁷ PRO, PREM 13/2009, Home Office to FO Oct. 10, 1968, M. Stewart (Foreign Secretary) to H. Wilson (Premier), Sept. 27, 1968. According to Jerzy Morawski, the Polish ambassador in London, two thirds of the employees of the Commercial Adviser's Bureau were also employees of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW), see J. Eisler, *Marzec 1968. Geneza, przebieg, konsekwencje (March 1968. Origin, Development, Consequences)*, Warszawa 1991, p. 372. These proportions were probably similar among the employees of the embassy itself and of the consulate.

this situation the burden of intelligence struggle after 1971 was taken up by the secret services of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland — as it seems, without significant successes. For one can hardly view as such the continual spying by the Polish Security Service on Polish emigrants, whom the Communist regime imagined to be a threat, or the murder of the dissident Georgij Markov in London by the Bulgarian Security Service⁷⁸.

Source materials serving to reconstruct the next thirty year period of relations between British and Polish intelligence are far from being complete. One can, however, signal a few issues. In the era of Edward Gierek's rule, regardless of the detente in international relations, mutual espionage continued. In their battle with the SIS the Polish secret services recorded two serious losses. In 1971 Kazimierz Stefański, Lieutenant-Colonel of military intelligence, set out for London with a secret mission, and vanished without a trace. Everything shows that either he was a former British agent, or he made the decision to flee during his mission. Ten years later, just before the introduction of martial law in Poland, Colonel Włodzimierz Ostaszewski⁷⁹, ex-deputy commander of military intelligence, escaped to Great Britain through Yugoslavia. After the downfall of Communism, in contrast to the Americans, British intelligence does not show off its Polish ex-agents nor demand they be honoured in Poland.

In the first half of the 1980s, despite the nullification of the independent trade union movement and the introduction of martial law in Poland as well as an exacerbation of East-West relations, ideological considerations did not dominate British-Polish relations. Because of their "special relations" with the Americans, the British secret services knew about the CIA's secret operation to support the underground "Solidarity" movement, although there is nothing to prove that the British were materially or organizationally engaged in this action⁸⁰. On the other hand

⁷⁸ Z. Jagodziński, *Biblioteka żywa (The Living Library)*, in: *Biblioteka Polska w Londynie 1942-1992*, Londyn 1993, pp. 57-58; C. Andrew, V. Mitrokhin, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

⁷⁹ W. Bereś, J. Skoczylas, *Generał Kiszczak mówi prawie wszystko (General Kiszczak is Quite Open)*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 10-11, 173.

⁸⁰ R. M. Gates, *From the Shadows. The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and how They Won the Cold War*, New York 1996, pp. 236-239, 450-451; C. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only. Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*, London 1995, pp. 468-469.

the government of People's Poland helped to suppress the strike of the British miners in the years 1984–1985, against whom Margaret Thatcher's government engaged the full arsenal of means at the disposal of MI5, from the surveillance of trade union leaders, through eavesdropping to provocation. General Wojciech Jaruzelski turned out to be an unexpected ally of the conservative British government, and despite Moscow's suggestions did not agree to stop supplying Polish coal to Great Britain⁸¹. Poland, craving for foreign currency, could not afford to support her class allies — to British miners to counteract the free market ideology that threatened them as an occupational group.

The downfall of the Communist dictatorship in Poland in 1989 opened a new chapter in the relations of the intelligence services of both countries. Since 1990 British experts have helped in the construction of the organizational structures of the secret services of democratic Poland. The size of the SIS station in Warsaw has been reduced, and the names of its chiefs, although probably not of all officers, have been reciprocally disclosed. Both countries have established co-operation in combating terrorism and drug trafficking. During the Gulf War of 1990–1991 Polish intelligence supplied the CIA and the SIS with a lot of information on Iraq's infrastructure, a large part of which had been constructed by Polish building contractors⁸².

The common action of the British and Polish secret services of which we know something more, has been the organization by the Polish State Security Bureau and the MI5 in November 1993 of a controlled arms' purchase in Poland for the terrorists from the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), who operated in Northern Ireland and fought against the IRA. The consignment of weapons bought by UVF messengers was later taken over by the British authorities when the container ship "Inowrocław" brought them from Gdynia to Teesport⁸³. This operation served the progress of the peace-making process in Northern Ireland, crowned with the conclusion of Good Friday agreement between nationalists and loyalists in the spring of 1998.

⁸¹ S. Milne, *The Enemy Within. The Secret War against the Miners*, London 1995, pp. 296–297.

⁸² M. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 159; M. Urban, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁸³ M. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

Everything shows that the foundations of the co-operation of British and Polish intelligence, whether formalized, or to what extent, we do not know, had arisen long before Poland's accession to NATO, which took place on March 12, 1999. On that day Great Britain and Poland became allies again, almost exactly 60 years after the conclusion of their first alliance.

Poland's membership of NATO does not signify the co-operation of its intelligence service on equal terms. The biggest powers in the pact are cautious of sharing their secrets with the partner, who does not possess its own intelligence service and has to rely on the information received from the secret services of its other members. Above the structures of the pact there is a close co-operation between American and British intelligence dating back to the Second World War and also encompassing spying on the European allies of the USA. Poland, interested mainly in her closest neighbours, has no need for conducting global intelligence and for spying e.g. on Great Britain. This, however, need not signify reciprocity on Britain's part.

The beginning of the 21st century poses new challenges to the intelligence of Poland and Great Britain, different from their traditional roles, those of allies in the Second World War, or of enemies in the Cold War, when the foe was clearly defined. Of increasing importance is their mutual co-operation in combating terrorism, drug-smuggling and other kinds of organized crime, including the laundering of dirty money. This does not signify, however, the elimination of the intelligence's classical tasks, such as gaining information and identifying the potential threats.