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BRITISH PROPAGANDA DIRECTED AT POLAND BETWEEN 1947 AND 1956*

The aims of British propaganda directed at Poland between 1947 and 1958 were determined by the principles of foreign policy of Great Britain towards the communist authorities in Warsaw, and evolved as priorities in the foreign policy of London towards Soviet satellites changed.

From 1947 onwards, there was a growing and increasingly vivid tendency in British foreign policy to halt the expansion of communism in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The Soviet Union was perceived by political and, in particular, military decision makers as a major threat to the security of Great Britain¹.

On 14th January 1947, a few days before the general election in Poland, which was to be the fulfilment of the decisions taken in Yalta, a staff meeting took place in the Foreign Office, attended by the British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, and heads of diplomatic missions of Great Britain in Eastern Europe. At this meeting the strategy in propaganda in the face of the progressing sovietisation of these countries was, among other things, worked out. The participants had no particular illusions that the election in Poland would be held in a way to bring victory to the Polish Peasants' Party (*PSL*). The same pessimistic predictions were made in comment on the developments in Romania and Bulgaria. It was agreed that the major aim of the policy of Great Britain in this part of Europe should be to counteract the Soviet expansion, yet while showing no official support for a legal political opposition which still existed there².

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¹ R. J. Aldrich, *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain 1945-1970*, Manchester 1998, pp. 174-175.

The English quite naively counted on co-operation with the socialist parties which participated in the communist-controlled governments. As they believed, it would result in the situation in which "Western concepts of social democracy may, if possible, in the course of time be adopted in as many Eastern European countries as possible". In the field of propaganda they wished to maintain British prestige among the largest possible number of people in this part of the continent through spreading information on social programmes, being introduced by the Labour Government on the British Isles, and glorifying the Western style of life, as well as combating anti-British propaganda. In order to achieve these targets, it was decided to make full use of the foreign language radio programmes of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)³.

As regards Poland, British diplomacy was aimed at, as it turned out — too ambitiously, the prevention of a totalitarian regime from coming into being there, even though it did not possess sufficient resources to do so. In the field of propaganda the British strove to maintain the respect and recognition which they had gained, according to them, in Poland, through standing up to all the efforts made by communists to show a distorted image of Great Britain. The authorities in London realized that a number of Poles made Winston Churchill responsible for the after-war fate of Poland, thus British propaganda made efforts to put blame for this on Stalin's Soviet Union. Already then, two years prior to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany by Western powers, the British appreciated the propaganda meaning of the possibility of recognition of the border on the Lusatian Neisse and Oder by Great Britain, which, however, was not carried out by British diplomacy then, but instead it was used by communist propaganda against the UK and other Western powers. In addition to employing Polish language BBC programmes, the English, to pursue their goals, intended to make use of the periodical "Głos Anglii" ("Voice of England"), licenced by the Warsaw authorities⁴.

² The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew (quoted below as: TNA, PRO), FO 953/4E, P 198/198/950, the meeting in FO on 14th Jan. 1947; on the weaknesses of the then USSR propaganda addressed to the Western world see: V. Pechatnov, *Exercise in Frustration: Soviet Foreign Propaganda in the Early Cold War, 1945-47*, "Cold War History", 2001, № 2, s. 1-27.

³ TNA, PRO, FO 953/4E, P 198/198/950, the meeting in the Foreign Office (FO) on 14th Jan. 1947.

Further decisions regarding propaganda towards European communist states were taken in the Foreign Office on 17th January 1947, when the meeting mentioned above continued. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in this department, Christopher Mayhew, suggested that communism should be shown in propaganda as a new kind of the colonial system. The case of deliveries of Polish coal at lowered prices to the Soviet Union was raised as one of the examples worth making use of. It turned out, however, that such a recommendation would collide with the directive which forbade openly attacking the Kremlin.

Eventually, a decision was taken to popularize the term "Soviet colonial system", and it was first hinted to a MP in the House of Commons so that he could use it in public debate.

While the BBC programmes designated for the listeners in Eastern Europe were the fundamental tool of British propaganda directed at nations in those countries during the whole Cold-War period, especially within 1947-1956, the press played a similar role towards its readers in Great Britain. However, the authorities in London were concerned about the fact that major press titles only sporadically had an interest in the events in Eastern Europe, such as the general election in Poland, only to have their correspondents return to the UK immediately afterwards, which made the "iron curtain" drop again. The reluctance of British newspapers to maintain permanent correspondents in those countries was largely influenced by high expenses which it would incur as well as by the little interest the readers showed in this part of Europe. Between 1947 and 1948 British journalists did not encounter any greater difficulties in visiting communist countries, excepting the USSR, hence the Foreign Office strove to induce British newspapers to keep at least one correspondent in each of the Eastern European states⁵. From 1949 onwards, as the confrontation between the East and the West continued to grow, this turned out to be practically impossible.

The fixing of the results of the 19th January 1947 general election by Polish communists, who were then in power, did not surprise British diplomacy which, according to the previously agreed plan, limited their reaction to a relatively moderate criti-

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ TNA, PRO, FO 953/4E, P 198/198/950, *Policy in Eastern Europe*, 17th Jan. 1947; T. Shaw, *The British Popular Press and the Early Cold War*, "History", 1998, N° 1, pp. 66-85.

cism of the way it had been held. However, tightening a communist noose on Poland's neck did not initially bring any constraints on British information activities in the country on the Vistula. Even though in April 1947 the British Embassy complained about the censorship and anti-British instructions which were given to the local Polish press, already two days after the general election the British Information Centre, with a small library in Marszałkowska street, was opened and visited by several guests daily, where 16 mm. films were also shown for 65 people. All these, including exhibitions in show-cases in front of the building, were, however, meagre means to influence the Polish people. It was the "Voice of England", published in a circulation of between 35 and 50 thousand copies, which had much wider scope of influence. However, even this periodical faced difficulties in showing Great Britain as a successful country, when it was trying to cope with problems in its colonies, and after the severe winter of 1947/1948 was standing on the verge of bankruptcy. Quite the opposite result from what had been expected was produced by the policy of the British Embassy to send out to Polish newspapers either articles or photos from the British press. The former were never published at all, while the photographs often served to illustrate publications which were out of line with British propaganda goals. A little comfort for the London authorities was offered by the BBC foreign news bulletin. British diplomats based in Warsaw, estimated through observation that this was the foreign radio station which was the most frequently listened to in Poland in the first quarter of 1947⁶.

Despite different difficulties, the atmosphere for the information activity of the British Embassy in the summer 1947 was still bearable. The situation began to deteriorate in the autumn of that year, especially after the PSL leader, Stanisław Mikołajczyk fled to the United Kingdom, which was made possible with the help of American and British diplomats. On the one hand, the anti-British propaganda in Poland continued to grow, which, among

⁶ TNA, PRO, FO 953/32, PE 2221/2221/953, a quarterly report 1st Jan. — 31st March 1947; on the policy of Great Britain towards Poland see: M. K. Kamiński, *Polska i Czechosłowacja w polityce Stanów Zjednoczonych i Wielkiej Brytanii 1945–1948 (Poland and Czechoslovakia in the Policy the USA and Great Britain between 1945 and 1948)*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 138–180, 239–277 and W. Boro-dziej, *Od Poczdamu do Szklarskiej Poręby. Polska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1945–1947 (From Potsdam to Szklarska Poręba. Poland in International Relations, 1945–1947)*, London 1990, pp. 186–201.

other things, raised the reluctance of London to recognize the Oder — Neisse line, and on the other hand, it was not possible to influence the Polish press through delivering to it any materials, except for those concerning technology. The issue with Polish Radio looked similar.

As of the end of October 1947, the state owned enterprise “Orbis” terminated the contract with the British Embassy regarding the exhibitions of British photos in its 19 centres outside Warsaw. It was the BBC programmes which remained the major tool of British counter-propaganda, apart from to the censored “Voice of England” and the British Information Centre. British diplomats were satisfied with the fact that there were no signals to indicate any attempts of the Polish authorities to limit the access to this radio station, which might have been possible through, for instance, not producing short wave band radio receivers⁷.

The coordination of British propaganda directed at Poland at the beginning of 1948 was still questionable, despite an increasingly deteriorating international situation. In the Foreign Office, due to some financial difficulties, the possibility of cutting by half the duration of Polish language BBC programmes, was being contemplated. This idea was strongly opposed by British Ambassador in Warsaw, Donald Gainer, who emphasised that the radio station served as the most powerful British instrument to influence the Poles. It was the BBC programmes where the subjects were broadcast which brought the regime the most irritation such as: criticising the system of government in the USSR and communist states, introducing the aims of the policies of the West, and showing examples of the dependence of Poland on its eastern neighbour⁸.

In the field of a propaganda policy towards Polish people, the BBC had, however, a new rival, which were Polish language programmes in the Voice of America. The emigrant London based “Polish Daily” [Pol. “Dziennik Polski”] estimated on 13th January 1948 that in Poland they were more popular than the BBC

⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 953/247, PE 549/549/955, *Report on Information Activities, July-Dec. 1947*; on propaganda activities of the authorities in Warsaw see: A. Dudek, *Mechanizm i instrumenty propagandy zagranicznej Polski w latach 1946-1950 (The Mechanism and Instruments of Foreign Propaganda of Poland between 1946-1950)*, Wrocław 2002.

⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 953/245, PE 5/52/955, Gainer to H. C. Bowen on 1st Jan. 1948.

programmes because of their stronger anti-communist tone. This was acknowledged by the Head of the Polish section of the BBC, Gregory McDonald who thought, however, that his radio station was much more reliable as regards the credibility of the facts it showed to the public⁹. This particular aspect of the policy of the editors was crucial to the success of the BBC already during World War II, when the station gained substantial recognition among different listeners, as it introduced news either good or bad, yet always true ones, which in consequence made it possible to lead subtle, but always efficient propaganda against "the Axis" states.

The re-evaluation of the British policy in the field of anti-communist propaganda had already taken place before the Prague coup (February 1948) and the Berlin crisis (April 1948), and it basically resulted from an increasingly growing sense of threat from communism, as well as local conflicts in Greece, Iran, and in the Far East. The fact that in September 1947, after the conference held in Szklarska Poręba, the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (*Cominform*), was established, reminded some of a threat which had been posed by the *Comintern*, the organization dissolved in 1943¹⁰. After all, the English overestimated the importance of this new organization, whose role, after the cursing of the Yugoslav dictator, Josif Broz Tito, was not of great significance.

However, in response to what seemed to be the communist threat, the British Cabinet approved of the establishing in January 1948 of a new department within the Foreign Office, called the Information Research Department (IRD), which soon became an almost autonomous institution within the structures of British diplomacy, being 50 percent financed by a secret budget and cooperating with the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). The major goal of IRD, which was supposed to work undercover, was to counteract communist propaganda. Within the Foreign Office there had already existed another department, called the Information Policy Department (IPD), which focused on propagating

⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 953/245, PE 1205/52/955, F. Savery to P. H. Hancock on 13th Jan. 1948. During his journey in southern Poland, the First Secretary of the British Embassy, Grant Purves heard some Poles listening to the BBC both in Czorsztyn, and in the Francuski Hotel in Cracow.

¹⁰ B. Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges. The United States and Eastern Europe*, New York 1991, pp. 29-30.

a positive image of Great Britain in the world, yet in the field of fighting against communism this one remained in the background. IRD was to primarily concentrate on preparing analyses concerning the USSR, the aims of Moscow, and methods applied in the expansion of communism. The "A" class materials, based on secret diplomatic and intelligence sources, were handed over to friendly governments, while "B" class materials, which came from less secret sources, were publicised in Great Britain and in the non-communist world among friendly journalists, academics, trade unionists and political activists in order to utilise them in their professional activities. At the beginning of the 1950s, IRD embraced more than 50 states with its activity¹¹.

For obvious reasons, Poland was not an area of IRD activity, except for the materials which were delivered by this institution to the Polish section of the BBC. Instead, IRD used the Polish case in other countries to deter them from communism and show the model of enslaving the countries in Eastern Europe. One of the first analyses of this new department of the Foreign Office, designated to be used with confidentiality, bore the title *How Communism Gains and Consolidates Control. The Example of Poland*¹².

Calling IRD into being by the Labour Government was a sign that the British switched to something more than just propagating a positive image of their country, that is a psychological war, or an element of political warfare against communist countries, and the USSR in particular. The USA pursued a similar policy. A conviction prevailed in the State Department that satellite states constituted the best possible field for Western cultural penetration and exertion of influence on their inhabitants through propaganda. The authorities in London, however, did not intend to go too far in this matter and therefore ruled out the possibility to use the so called Black Propaganda as the method to be applied then. In 1948, the English rather desired, through propaganda activities, to weaken the ties among respec-

¹¹ P. Lashmar, J. Oliver, *Britain's Secret Propaganda War*, Stroud 1998, pp. 26-33; *History Notes*, IRD. *Origins and Establishment of the Foreign Office Information Research Department 1946-48*, London 1995; H. Wilford, *Information Research Department: Britain's Secret Cold War Weapon Revealed*, "Review of International Studies", 1998 (24), pp. 353-369; R. J. Aldrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

¹² TNA, PRO, FO 1110/25, PR 78/57/913, *Foreign Office Note*, 18th March 1948.

tive countries within the block rather than stir up military irredentism there. The principles of a new, modified propaganda policy of Great Britain were to introduce the Western style of life as the ultimate goal, to indicate the extreme poverty, which was omnipresent in the USSR, and to contrast peace with communism. In propaganda activities, which were not to be openly associated with the London authorities, the intention was to compare communism with fascism, and Stalin with Hitler, and to spread information about the system of compulsory work in the USSR¹³. Moscow's response to the intensification of the radio propaganda by the British and Americans was to start jamming their radio stations which broadcast to the territories of the USSR and Eastern Europe in February 1948. However, the practical implications of these steps for the listeners were still insignificant in the years that followed and what is more, communist countries continued to manufacture and sell radio receivers provided with short wave bands.

The increasingly noticeable elimination of barriers to criticising communism caused a change in the tone of the Polish section of the BBC, where, after all, the Poles who worked there did not need to be persuaded into criticising the USSR or the arrangements prevailing in their home country. This, however, caused a growing number, from the autumn of 1948 onwards, of complaints of the Polish authorities towards the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Warsaw about, among other things, the BBC coverage of the escape of Stanisław Mikołajczyk to Great Britain, and the programmes by Adam Ciołkosz and Jan Nowak. The Ambassador Gainer even shared this criticism to a certain extent, and made efforts to induce London to mitigate the contents of the programmes. However, he did not find allies in the Foreign Office, where the programme on Mikołajczyk as a symbol of resistance was received with acceptance. Moreover, the IRD analysis on the former Polish opposition leader was printed in the French press¹⁴.

¹³ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/24, PR 41/41/913, W. Edwards to C. Warner on 19th Feb. 1948, memorandum *Communism — New Publicity Policy* of 12th Feb. 1948; FO 1110/61, PR 378/378/913, a minute by Warner of 10th March 1948.

¹⁴ TNA, PRO, FO 953/246, PE 1626/52/955, Gainer to Warner on 1st June 1949, a minute by R. Hankey of 1st July 1948; G. R. Urban, *Radio Wolna Europa i walka o demokrację. Moja zimna wojna w czasach zimnej wojny (Radio Free Europe and the Fight for Democracy. My Cold War during the Cold War)*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 55–56.

The Berlin blockade by Stalin, and, on the other hand, the lack of recognition of the Oder — Neisse Line by Western powers, led to the intensification of the propaganda in Poland from mid 1948 onwards, following the Soviet pattern, which accused Great Britain and the USA of rebuilding Western Germany in order to establish there a base to be used in military aggression against socialist countries. The British tried to resist this policy in radio propaganda through recalling the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact, the attitude of Stalin towards the Warsaw Rising, or the annexation of Vilnius and Lvov by the USSR, even though nothing was done on the last issue by the Poles during World War II¹⁵.

The progressing sovietization of Poland and increasingly growing tensions between the West and the East, despite the end of the Berlin blockade, brought about further escalation in a propaganda struggle in 1949. In the memorandum “British Policy towards Soviet Communism” of 28th July 1949, which was not handed over to American diplomats until the beginning of January 1950, the goals of British policy towards Eastern Europe were listed as follows: preventing the Soviet expansion and weakening the rule of Moscow over the countries which it had dominated. The British strove, within their limited funds, for the implementation of these plans, worrying that the indoctrination at schools and Soviet propaganda in satellite states may have led to deeply advanced sovietisation. They intended to act counter to this, primarily through propaganda and secret operations in the territories of the Soviet satellites, not aimed, however, at triggering off a premature uprising. Poland was not, however, the major focus of their attention, irrespective of a joint action taken by American and British intelligence to build the resistance movement there. The most promising in the view of British diplomacy seemed to be the fact that *modus vivendi* was reached with Tito’s Yugoslavia, and that Albania could be broken free from the communist block. In their propaganda towards Poland and other satellites, the British preferred to cautiously recourse to the Yugoslav case. A long-term goal of British policy was to limit the Soviet sphere of influence exclusively to its borders and to lead to the formation of the government there, which would be inclined to friendly cooperation with the West¹⁶.

¹⁵TNA, PRO, FO 953/246, PE 1626/52/955, a minute by R. Hankey of 5th Oct. 1948.

Towards the end of 1949, the authorities in Warsaw caused the closing down of the "Voice of England", and at the beginning of 1950 they prohibited sales of British newspapers and periodicals by the British Embassy, which the Foreign Office tried to publicize through the BBC. The increasing spy-mania made it difficult for British diplomatic personnel to collect data, which was transferred to London with the view to be used by IRD and the BBC. The pessimism of the British concerning their actions and propaganda prospects in Poland was not shared by the Russians. The Command of the Northern Group of the Soviet Forces which were based in Poland, who perceived the activities of the British as a substantial threat, were amazed at the existence of the number of different institutions which in a communist country kept spreading Western propaganda against the USSR¹⁷.

The regime press tried to discredit Western radio programmes, yet they continued to be very popular among the Poles, as a prime source of information. In 1949, Radio Madrid — a new rival of the Polish section of the BBC, in addition to the Voice of America, came into being. The Polish section was established by Karol Wagner, a pre-war radio journalist who had also worked for the Polish section of the BBC during the war. The better the audibility in Poland at the beginning of 1950, the more serious competitor of the Anglo-Saxon radio stations it became, because it was perceived by the Poles as Polish. It stemmed from the fact that Wagner, who was the author of a half an hour programme, enjoyed Spanish hospitality, while General Franco's subordinates did not have the ambition to control his activities through directives from above. The British diplomats in Poland estimated that Radio Madrid programmes were primarily intended for a wide range of listeners, and its journalists used words such as *Russky* [Pol. *kacap*], which were vulgar and therefore not to be allowed in the BBC programmes, to name the Russians. In London, however, there was no intention to change the programme line, as it was presumed that a more moderate approach

¹⁶ TNA, PRO, FO 371/77622, N 11007/1051/38, memorandum *British Policy towards Soviet Communism* of 28th July 1949; FO 953/1183, P 10223/2, FO to Budapest on 19th Jan. 1951.

¹⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 953/962, PG 15532/1, *Report on Information Activities*, Warsaw, July — Dec. 1949; FO 953/955, Warsaw to FO on 13th Jan. 1950; *Polska — ZSRR. Struktury podległości. Dokumenty KC WKP(b) 1944–1949 (Poland — the USSR. The Structures of Dependence. Documents of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party [Bolsheviks] 1944–1949)*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 268–277.

of the BBC would let the station maintain its current position among the Poles, all the more that numerous programmes were anyway of a strongly anti-government or anti-Russian dimension. On the other hand, the policy of the British government literary made it impossible for the BBC to get engaged in an open propaganda war against communist states¹⁸.

From the beginning of 1950 onwards, the British found it increasingly difficult to acquire information concerning the situation on Poland and to monitor the reception of the BBC in connection with the growing spy-mania of the communist authorities, which was also visible in the passing of more and more drastic laws. In the middle of March 1950, the SIS officer, Michael Winch, who was staying in Warsaw under the cover of a diplomat, informed London that it was difficult to examine the reactions of an ordinary Pole to the BBC programmes, because "the trouble is that whereas I used to meet a Pole or Poles every day, I am lucky now if I meet one for real conversation once a week". The British Embassy in Warsaw suggested that the BBC sneered at the decree on state secrets, which could transform an ordinary map of Warsaw a "top secret" item¹⁹.

The press in Poland took pains to discredit the Polish language programmes which were broadcast from the West. Apart from not completely effective jamming, other technical means were used for the purpose of restricting the access to Western radio stations, such as limiting the manufacturing of short wave band radio receivers and installing in public places the *kołchoźniki*, that is the receivers without controls to adjust to the required stations, and encouraging to use them at home. The British Embassy in Warsaw, despite mounting difficulties, did its best to aid the Polish section of the BBC, by keeping London up to date through special, coded radio dispatches about anti-British attacks carried out by the media in the Polish People's Republic (PRL), and at the same time suggesting ways of counter-acting and pointing at the inconsistency in communist propaganda²⁰.

¹⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 953/955, PG 1552/6, BBC do FO 17 I 1950, FO to Warsaw on 8th March 1950, the minutes of 9th Feb. 1950; the Sikorski Institute and Museum, Gen. Władysław Anders' collection, col. 11/356, *Memorandum on the Polish Section of Radio Madrid*; on Radio Madrid see: P. Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej (Emigration in the International Policy)*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 64-65.

¹⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 953/955, PG 1552/6, Winch to B. Ruthven-Murray on 17th March 1950; PG 1552/9, Warsaw to FO on 27th Jan. 1950.

At the London conference of Foreign Ministers of the USA, Great Britain and France in May 1950, a memorandum was accepted which pledged a common policy, also in the field of propaganda, towards the USSR and its satellites. During the discussions there was a feeling of certain discrepancy in opinions expressed by Washington, London and Paris. Whereas the Americans aimed at the closest possible cooperation with the emigrants from communist states, the British and the French had more reservations, as they saw room for the activities of the diaspora mainly in the field of propaganda. There was harmony in direct talks between the British and American diplomats with reference to stepping up the propaganda offensive towards communist regimes in Europe and the essential coordination of actions taken by the BBC and the Voice of America, concerning the timetables of their programmes and topics. It was also agreed that the assets of "Titoism" should be praised to the people of these states, even though there was awareness of their hostility towards any sort of communism. In turn, in trilateral talks the cooperation was agreed upon the coordination of propaganda activities towards satellite states, showing them that they were not forgotten by the West. It was the cooperation among the Embassies of Great Britain, the USA and France behind the "Iron Curtain" on how to counteract the anti-Western propaganda which was one of the elements in favour of maintaining diplomatic relations with the countries of the communist bloc²¹.

Despite their pledge to co-operate with emigrants in a service to Western propaganda, the British were very cautious on this issue. Towards the end of May 1950, Count Edward Raczyński, who was the war-time Ambassador of the Polish Republic in London and a major figure in the Polish diaspora in Great Britain, approached the Foreign Office for assigning a special time in the BBC programmes broadcast to Poland for the representatives of

²⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 953/955, PG 1552/21, Warsaw to FO 27 III 1950; FO 953/959, PG 15516/1, *Report on Information Activities*, 5 IV 1950.

²¹ TNA, PRO, FO 371/124928, ZP 2/193, "The London Conference, May 1950", talks between G. Jebb and Jessup on 25th April 1950; ZP 2/192, "The London Conference, May 1950", talks between W. Strang, P. Jessup and R. Massiglia on 28th April 1950; the Tripartite Ministerial Meeting, 11th May 1950; The British prioritized France, Italy and Germany as far as fighting the communist penetration was concerned, and expressed the opinion that satellite states were more important in British propaganda than the USSR, see: R. J. Aldrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-187.

the Polish Government in Exile so that they might discuss Polish matters without any supervision. In support of his idea Mr Raczyński mentioned the success of Radio Madrid, which was popular among the Poles because they regarded it as a genuine mouthpiece for their views. The British were not impressed by this idea of the former Polish Ambassador. At the meeting of senior staff members of the Foreign Office on 8th June 1950, a decision was taken to refuse this request, and the participants gathered that the politicians in exile, as the time went by, became increasingly detached from the reality of the situation in their country. Also, the conviction was prevailing that the time had not come yet to lead a civil disobedience campaign in Poland, where Polish emigrant leaders could be used. It was understood that the BBC was not suitable for the role assigned to the station by Raczyński, and finally, towards the end of July 1950 the refusal of the British was handed over to him²².

The attitude of London was not changed by the fact that communist aggression in Korea had already been taking place, and the world found itself on the verge of an atomic war. The Labour Government of Clement Attlee tried to appease the Americans, even though it sent them in their aid, within the UN Force, a British contingent of soldiers. The Korean War, fought between 1950–1953, strengthened the need for anti-communist propaganda in the Western world, where IRD played a fundamental role, but it did not cause any considerable changes in a relatively moderate tone of the BBC programmes, in comparison with Radio Madrid, addressed to Polish listeners. Not surprisingly, the BBC began to lose popularity in the competition with programmes broadcast from remote Spain by Wagner. This was noticed by the British diplomats based in Poland. The Vice-Consul in Szczecin, Henry Bartlett, stated on 7th November 1950 in his report to London “I have heard it said that people listen to Madrid for pleasure, to the Voice of America in order to know what the Americans are thinking, and to the BBC to have an impartial summing-up”. However, the British Consul noticed that not everybody found free time to listen to all the three stations, with the preference given to Radio Madrid²³.

²² TNA, PRO, FO 953/956, PG 1552/29, a minute by G. Harrison of 23rd May 1950, a minute by B. Ruthven-Murrau of 3rd July 1950, a minute by Ch. Warner of 21st July 1950.

²³ TNA, PRO, FO 953/956, PG 1552/43, H. Bartlett to I. Grey on 7th Nov. 1950.

A good deal of propaganda material was delivered to the British by the fact that in November 1950 a congress organized by the pro-Soviet World Peace Council was transferred from Sheffield to Warsaw after the British authorities had effectively prevented it from taking place in Great Britain through applying different administrative measures and visa restrictions. The transfer of the delegates from the British Isles to the Polish capital by airlift created by 13 aircraft must have required substantial financial effort, just like providing board and lodging for 1756 delegates, who were given travelling allowances in the amount of monthly wages of a Polish worker each. No wonder that the Foreign Office was desperate to show to the world and Poland the congress as a communist undertaking which bore the character of a massive bribery of its participants²⁴.

The British Consulates in Poland were a precious source of information also for the needs of IRD and BBC. The fact of them being closed down on Polish territory with the exception of Warsaw and Gdańsk was a sign of a far reaching deterioration in relations between Poland and Great Britain. In 1950 the Consulates were closed down in: Poznań, Łódź and Katowice, and in February 1951 the Vice-Consulate in Szczecin, which considerably lowered the chances for the British to gain information on the internal situation in Poland²⁵. The British Embassy in Warsaw faced serious difficulties in collecting information useful in propaganda. The authorities in London were wondering, even before the outbreak of the Korea war, whether the USSR satellites did not deliberately aim at complete closures of British diplomatic posts. The English themselves preferred not to break off diplomatic relations with communist states, regarding their diplomatic agencies as precious sources of information from behind the "Iron Curtain"²⁶.

One of them, working till the end of 1950, was still the British Information Centre, whose library was used by an increasing number of visitors after the ban on selling the British press. The

²⁴ P. Deery, *The Dove Flies East: Whitehall, Warsaw and the 1950 World Peace Congress*, "Australian Journal of Politics & History", 2002, № 4, pp. 462-468.

²⁵ J. Tebinka, R. Techman, *Ostatni raport brytyjskiego wicekonsula w Szczecinie Henry'ego F. Bartletta o sytuacji w tym mieście (6 III 1951) (The Last Report of the British Vice-Consul in Szczecin, Henry F. Bartlett, on the Situation in this Town, 6th March 1951)*, "Przegląd Zachodniopomorski", 2000, vol. 4, pp. 213-217.

²⁶ TNA, PRO, FO 371/86747, NS 1051/22, memorandum *Treatment of Western Diplomatic Missions on the Soviet Orbit in Europe* of 16th March 1950.

contract for leasing the building terminated, however, on 31st December 1950, and the Polish authorities had no intention to prolong it. On the other hand, after the "artificial" revaluation of the Polish *złoty*, the British Embassy would be unable to continue to finance the lease of the building of the Centre. The English, however, strove to put blame for the liquidation of the British agency on the Warsaw authorities. Therefore, they did not intend to announce the decision about the closure, waiting for the contract to terminate, and only then to publicly protest against it. On 30th December 1950, "The Times" wrote about the crowds of Poles banging on the door of the Centre the day before its closure, where books were being distributed to them from the closed library²⁷. After the closure of this institution, the only instrument which remained in the hands of the British for the next 5 years to be used in influencing Polish society were the BBC programmes in Polish language.

The extremely unfavourable atmosphere in political relations between Great Britain and Poland persisted between 1950 and 1953. In addition to adverse international atmosphere bilateral conflicts also contributed to this. An indispensable element in mutual relations were different diplomatic incidents which stemmed from arresting by the Security Office those members of the staff of the British Embassy in Poland who did not possess a diplomatic immunity. The communist regime gave through its activities a number of reasons for remaining hostile, especially through political terror, including arbitrary arrests and show-trials. Bad political relations, regarding Poland by London as a Soviet satellite, and Great Britain by Warsaw as an imperialist state, led to the escalation of mutual accusations, which were reflected in propaganda, and had an impact on the creation of a negative image of the other party.

From the point of view of the Warsaw authorities, the first place in the row of black sheep was taken by the USA, and sometimes it was shared with the — as they used to say — "neo-Hitler" Federal Republic of Germany. Great Britain held its position in the second row, and after all, during Stalinist period, the PRL political relations with Paris were worse than with London. Communist propaganda could not, of course, exploit the

²⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 953/962, PG 15532/3, FO to Warsaw on 16th December 1950; FO 1110/593, PRG 55/8, F. Shepherd to H. Hohler on 3rd February 1953; "The Times" 30th December 1950.

reasons for which the Poles might really not like Great Britain, that is the sense of being betrayed by London, which had left Poland to the mercy of the USSR. In that situation the subjects such as: colonialism, British imperialism, bad position of workers, or even the British reluctance to recognize the Oder — Lusatian Neisse Line could not do much harm to Great Britain among the Polish public, just like the effigies of Churchill with his inseparable cigar, which were carried on May 1st marches despite the efforts made through the BBC to stop such attacks, yet without getting into any direct polemics with the Polish press and radio.

The development of the situation in the so called People's Poland aroused the British interest also from the aspect of anti-communist propaganda led by IRD outside the borders of the satellite states. Special attention in those actions, like in propaganda addressed to the Polish listener, was paid to information obtained from a different sort of defector, who escaped from behind the "Iron Curtain". It was not important for the English to encourage anybody to flee the country, but only those who had access to important information, which was of intelligence value. It was the journalists secretly cooperating with IRD, who had the exclusive access to the fugitives who were in British hands, having been questioned first by the intelligence officers²⁸.

The Korean conflict put the two military blocks on the verge of war, thus the British propaganda, despite the pragmatic policy of Albion, became increasingly aggressive in its anti-communism. The Foreign Office diplomat, Pierson Dixon, who chaired the Official Committee of Communism, whose documents are still unavailable for research, gave his opinion at the meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 13th June 1951 on the aims of British propaganda led mostly through the BBC. While the British did not have high expectations regarding the nations of the USSR, tending to maintain the interest they took in the West, whereas in the case of satellite states they wished to stop sovietisation and "to foster the spirit of revolt"²⁹. This latter goal was pursued not only through propaganda means but also through secret operations of the SIS, carried together with the American

²⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/377, PR 12/46/51, Intelligence Division BAOR to FO on 5th April 1951.

²⁹ TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/275, COS (51) 97th Meeting on 13th June 1951.

intelligence service on Polish and Ukrainian territory, in order to build an underground backup there in case of war. Dixon's words meant abandoning a still relatively cautious policy from the previous year and might have unpredictable effects in the situation when part of the nations in satellite states awaited with hope the outbreak of World War III as a means to topple totalitarian dictatorships. On the other hand, the reality of life in the communist world and the degree of political terror created conditions in which even an open call for the resistance from the ruling dictatorships had very few chances of success on a larger scale.

The intensifying propaganda war made more and more demands on the British Embassy in Warsaw to collect information on, among other things, everyday life in Poland, intended for the use by IRD and the BBC. Towards the end of July 1951, the Foreign Office sent to its diplomatic agency in the capital of Poland a list of subjects which were of London's interest: 1) collectivisation: peasant resistance and discontent, 2) food situation: food shortages — local or general, food exports to the USSR, the price — wage relations, 3) labour: exploitation of workers, increasing targets, reduction in wages, sabotage, strikes, absenteeism, passive resistance, 4) religion: persecution of the Roman Catholic Church and people's resistance, influence of the Church on society, 5) cultural affairs: changes in communist ideology, lack of cooperation among the people of culture, Marxist indoctrination at schools and universities. First of all IRD emphasised the need to collect materials to show the inhuman treatment of the individual by communist regimes³⁰.

In response to this requirement, from the end of October 1951 the Embassy staff members began to dispatch, on a weekly basis, a special bulletin which contained remarks, mostly on the situation in the Polish capital and the surrounding areas, where suggestions for taking up specific subjects were placed. In the first such bulletin of 23rd October 1951 the Embassy reported on queues in front of shops, lack of coffee and other goods, and also on the rumours that bread rationing would be introduced. A joke which was in circulation in Warsaw was quoted, about the murder of the Polish radio journalist, Stefan Martyka, who became ill-famed for his anti-Western sentiments. It was as

³⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/389. PR 27/49/51, FO to Warsaw on 24th July 1951.

follows: “— Have you heard that Martyka’s murderer has been caught and given two years? — Why only two years? Because that is the sentence for illegal slaughter of a pig”³¹. It has not been determined whether this joke was broadcast by the Polish section of the BBC, but it seems unlikely in the light of the previous policy of the station, which avoided being vulgar contrary to Radio Madrid, or Radio Free Europe (RFE), the station established in July 1950 and financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The British realized that in the long run satellite states would turn out to be a burden for the USSR, and they tried, from the end of the 1940s, to stir up fears in those nations through special operations and propaganda. During the conversation between Churchill and Truman on the presidential yacht “Williamsburg” on 5th January 1952, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden remarked, somewhat optimistically, that the discontent with the communist rule in satellite states was bigger than the communist activity in Western Europe, though he warned against augmenting this tendency in the situation when the West had no intention of offering aid to possible insurgents. Both Churchill and Truman, despite the Korean war, were cautious about liberating the states under the Soviet domination. The British Prime Minister, however, was in favour of further intensification of efforts made by the two powers in the field of propaganda behind the Iron Curtain through radio broadcasts and through dropping leaflets, which was fully accepted by Truman³².

The decisions regarding the course of propaganda actions towards the Soviet block, which were later carried by IRD in the non-communist world and the BBC in satellite states, were taken at monthly meetings in the Foreign Office, where current topics which were suitable to be made use of, were discussed. At the meeting of 9th January 1952 the discussions were held about bad food situation in Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as the need to get through with radio programmes to young listeners through broadcasting, among others, sports programmes. A motion was also put forward to commission the British diplomatic agencies in communist states to provide information on the condition of

³¹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/389, PR 27/98, H. F. Bartlett to the BBC on 23rd October 1951.

³² TNA, PRO, FO 371/124998, ZP 2/12, talks between Churchill and Truman on 5th and 18th January 1952.

local health services there. The counter-acting of propaganda actions of the USSR itself, in which its allies, including Poland, participated, such as false allegations that the USA was using biological weapons against the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic, or a worldwide peace campaign, were discussed at the inter-departmental level, at senior staff meetings³³.

In the propaganda addressed to Poland, from 3rd May 1952 onwards the British gained a new ally but also a competitor in the form of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe, which was a sign of the escalation of psychological warfare run by the Americans against Soviet satellites. There was even a fear in the Foreign Office that in response, those countries would break off diplomatic relations with Washington, which would leave for the Anglo-Saxon powers the British agencies as the basic source of information on the internal situation within the Soviet block. Those fears were not surprising since in London itself the RFE broadcasts were regarded as aggressive, and some speeches of emigrant leaders — as those creating too optimistic perspectives to liberate their home countries from communist rule³⁴.

The establishing of the Polish section of RFE meant that the BBC was during the Cold War already marginalized for good, ranked behind Western radio stations which broadcast in Polish. The English could not to compete with the Americans on the financial side, which was reflected in the number of hours of respective programmes, and more precisely — their whole concept. While the BBC was primarily supposed to introduce London's views on reality, with a special focus on combating anti-British propaganda, RFE gave the impression that it was a Polish radio station, which could not, by any means, be said about the British radio³⁵.

Those circumstances did not, however, disturb the English in their sense of superiority towards this new American creation,

³³ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/512, PR 74/5, East European and Russian Regional Meeting, 9th January 1952; FO 1110/494, PR 41/68, a minute by J. H. Peck of 2 IV 1952.

³⁴ TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/275, COS (51) 97th Meeting on 13th June 1951; FO 953/1183, P 10223/2, the BBC Monitoring Service, RFE programmes of January and February 1951.

³⁵ J. Nowak-Jeziorański, *Wojna w eterze. Wspomnienia (The War on the Air. Memories)*, vol. 1: 1948-1956, London 1986, pp. 82-83, 283; K. Zamorski, *Pod anteną Radia Wolna Europa (On the Air of Radio Free Europe)*, Poznań 1995, pp. 39-51.

albeit they cooperated with each other. Almost on a yearly basis the IRD staff members visited the Munich radio station, looking at its structure and the way it functioned. The actual consultations, however, took place at an upper level between the management of IRD and CIA. In London, certain fears were raised of the insurrectionary propaganda spread by RFE, even though the Polish section was more timid in following Washington's advice than the Czech or Hungarian ones.

Except for American restrictions on supporting the Oder-Lusatian Neisse Line and presenting differences within political circles in exile by the RFE team, the station was allowed to explore almost every anti-communist subject. Whereas the English imposed constraints on itself, first of all upon using the Katyń issue against the USSR and the Warsaw authorities, which sided with Moscow on this lie. With reference to such a policy, the Labour Government was unanimous with the Conservative Cabinet which after the general election of October 1951 took over the rule. In April 1952, the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, successfully blocked the attempt to carry out a formal interrogation of witnesses by the sub-committee of the American Congress on British territory. In that situation, the BBC could do no more than "impartially" inform about the case, without putting the blame for the murder on the Russians. The English stated that Katyń had been publicised by Goebbels' propaganda in 1943, and they did not intend to subscribe to be the next who would raise this issue in anti-communist propaganda³⁶. There was also the other side of the coin, which was reported in diplomatic minutes. If in 1952 the British brought the Katyń issue to light, even though they, bearing in mind their alliance with Stalin, had remained silent during the war, this could raise doubts in the Western world about the credibility of their propaganda. The Americans did not have such hesitations and efficiently used the Katyń issue as a tool in a psychological war against the USSR and authorities in Warsaw.

³⁶ In IRD a study on Katyń, entitled *The Katyń Woods Murders*, was prepared on the 28 April 1956. Even though it did not receive a formal approval of the British Government, it was in fact the only case after World War II when a government institution ascribed the Katyń manslaughter to the Russians, see: *The Butler Memorandum*, in: *History Notes, Katyń. British Reactions to the Katyń Massacre 1943-2003*, London 2003, www.fco.gov.uk/.

The English, observed with a certain concern the militant rhetoric, especially during the electoral campaign, of the republican candidate for presidency, Dwight Eisenhower, who moved into the White House in January 1953. They estimated that the USA planned to intensify psychological warfare in order to maintain the atmosphere of resistance in satellite states. It was not necessarily on a par with the plans of the British authorities, who did not intend to incite a revolt behind the "Iron Curtain". On the other hand, British diplomacy wished to show the American public that they were determined in their fight against communism and actively participated in it. It was being noticed in London that the means which were designated by the Americans for psychological warfare with the USSR and its satellites were huge, yet London criticised the lack of coordination, and valued more the effectiveness of a joint effort of IRD and SIS³⁷.

Stalin's death in March 1953 did not change this offensive tendency in Washington. The Americans wished to make use of the weakness of the USSR after the dictator's death and intensify their pressure on the Kremlin through, among other things, feeling unrest in satellite states. On 16th April Eisenhower appealed in his speech for independence of Eastern European countries. Within the next couple of months the president even considered breaking off the truce in Korea. The British, even though they assessed that strategic goals of Moscow had not changed, they did notice that the Russians were trying to cool down the atmosphere of the Cold War. A fundamental, long-term goal of the British foreign policy was to bring, through the methods of psychological warfare, the whole Soviet political system to change or collapse. Yet London, highlighting in its propaganda the dangers of communism, was ready to resolve conflicts with the Kremlin through negotiations³⁸.

³⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 371/103510, AV 1022/13, a minute of 2nd January 1953, a visit of J. F. Dulles; FO 1110/586, PRG 45/6, P. H. Gore-Booth to A. Malcolm on 6th January 1953; DEFE 11/275, a minute by D. L. Darling of 19th February 1953; R. J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand, Britain, America, and Cold War Secret Intelligence*, London 2001, pp. 320–325.

³⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 371/106531, NS 1024/3, a minute by H. Hohler of 28th April 1953; FO 371/125052, ZP 23/116, a meeting between Eisenhower and J. F. Dulles, Bidault and Lord Salisbury on 11th July 1953; FO 1110/532, PR 101/116, a memorandum by J. W. Nichols of 24th March 1953 *Cold War Policy and Propaganda*.

The British tried, in any case, operating on Washington realistically as regards its too optimistic approach to psychological warfare as a means to defeat the USSR. With reference to the fact that Eisenhower nominated the founder of Radio Free Europe and one of psychological warfare experts, C. D. Jackson as his special advisor, a decision was taken in London towards March 1953, to hand over to him the British principles on psychological warfare. In the document of 25th March 1953 it was defined that the aim of “political warfare” was to impose one’s will on the opponent through the means other than war, and more specifically through diplomacy, propaganda, and economic means. The British further intended to propagate information on — as they named it — “the true conditions of life in a communist state”, though there is no doubt that it was done rather selectively, with numerous deficiencies of the so called real socialism being highlighted. The next point on the agenda was the warning of the Soviet expansion and methods which were used by Moscow to implement it, which made it impossible to reach a lasting agreement with “a Stalinist regime in Russia”. There was no mention that the dictator had not been alive any longer, but the Western powers found it difficult to determine directions of the Soviet policies just after his death³⁹.

British diplomats and the IRD specialists in propaganda were careful about the possibilities to liberate Soviet satellites, estimating that it would be impossible to carry this out without an open military conflict, even though every possible chance should be made use of in order to weaken links between those states and Moscow. In their current propaganda, the English did not intend, however, to publicise those pessimistic prospects among Eastern European nations, trying to maintain hope for liberating Eastern Europe, which would take place as a result of changes within the Soviet Union itself⁴⁰.

Stalin’s death, the news of which was first broadcast to the Polish listeners by the BBC, did not, however, bring Poland any visible changes for the better. The British Ambassador, Francis Shepherd, had suggested — already before the dictator’s death — resuming information activities in Poland, but there were no

³⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/586, PRG 45/61, a minute by W. Strang of 25th March 1953, a memorandum *The Strategy of Political Warfare* of 25th March 1953.

⁴⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/586, PRG 45/61, a memorandum *The Strategy of Political Warfare* of 25th March 1953.

chances to implement this idea even after March 1953. The fact that for almost a year there had been a competitor in the form of RFE made the number of letters from Poland decline substantially. What contributed, among other factors, were probably the fears of the Security Office, looking for the people mailing post to the West. In the first quarter of 1953 there were only two fugitives from Poland who were able to give some information useful for propaganda. On the other hand, the British considered, on the basis of reports from their Embassy in Warsaw, their radio programmes in Poland to be quite frequently listened to, despite being jammed, and to be popular, which was proven by the attacks on them by the official press and the Warsaw radio, which called the BBC “the Boom–Boom–Boom–Boooom Agency”⁴¹.

The situation after Stalin’s death looked paradoxical because Eisenhower’s administration, with their anti-communist attitude, perceived this as a chance to intensify the Cold War against, as they assumed, the weakened USSR. Whereas Churchill was in favour of the detente with new Kremlin rulers, who were ready for some compromise, for example, in the summer of 1953 they agreed to stop the war in Korea. The differences in broadcasts between the BBC and RFE reflected this policy, as well as the fact that RFE, admittedly did not lead black propaganda; it was an institution secretly financed and directed from Washington, and thus it could attack communist regimes much more freely than the BBC. After all, for internal reasons, the hiding of the fact that the institutions either subordinate or dependent on the British Government, like the BBC, continued an organized and intense anti-communist campaign on the British Islands and overseas, still remained the principle of the policy of the British Government⁴².

The State Department knew about those secret principles set in London, but it did not hamper the British — American cooperation, though the exchange of information in satellite states was not always complete. It was noticed in IRD when in March 1953 in Geneva, one British diplomat saw from his American colleague some interesting reports by CIA on everyday life in Poland and

⁴¹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/593, PRG 55/8, F. Shepherd to H. Hohler on 3rd February 1953; FO 1110/614, PRG 102/28, the BBC to IRD on 15th May 1953. The BBC programmes started with the beats of a drum, three short ones and one long, which meant the letter “V” (standing for “victory” in Morse code).

⁴² TNA, PRO, FO 1110/586, PRG 45/6, J. Peck to P. Gore-Booth on 9th April 1953.

coal exports to the USSR, facts which were completely unknown by the British before⁴³.

Indeed, the British did not intend to make empty promises, which might lead to the armed uprising, but the goal of their propaganda was, like the American's, to destabilise the regime, which could cause the situation to slip-out of control. The American propaganda of liberation was first tested not in Poland, but in Berlin and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), where on 16th and 17th June 1953 an uprising broke out, which was quickly quelled by the Russians⁴⁴.

After that event the English estimated that the USA accepted their view on the need to maintain hopes in satellite states, but without triggering revolts there. During the talks between the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, the USA, and France held in Washington in July 1953, the American Secretary of State, Foster Dulles, was pleased to notice that the USSR did not manage to strengthen its position in satellite states because of patriotism and religiousness of their peoples. The Head of American diplomacy perceived it as largely caused by radio propaganda which, as we have shown, referred to those aspects of lives of the inhabitants of Eastern Europe.

The three Ministers, apart from Dulles, the French, Georges Bidault, and the British, Lord Salisbury, were against stirring up a large scale uprising in Eastern Europe. Bidault doubted whether radio propaganda was at all efficient in heating up the atmosphere of hostility towards communism. In fact, there were certain differences among the powers. Dulles claimed that it was "spontaneous resistance of Eastern Europe" could induce the USSR to withdraw from its sphere of influence⁴⁵. From Moscow's perspective any spontaneous anti-communist upheavals in socialist countries were out of the question. This conviction was caused by the ideological superiority but also by specific facts in the policy of the West in the field of radio propaganda and special operations.

⁴³ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/586, PRG 45/56, FO to US Ambassador in London on 30th March 1953.

⁴⁴ C. D. Jackson even wished that the CIA had supported the insurgents in Berlin with supplies of weapons, because "the blood of martyrs" might have been used in propaganda against the USSR, see: T. Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets. Richard Helms and the CIA*, New York 1981, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁵ TNA, PRO, FO 371/125052, ZP 23/116, a minute by Harrison of 15th July 1953; FO 371/125053, ZP 23/129, the Tripartite meeting on 10th July 1953.

In the summer of 1953, even though the Cold War had already lasted several years, the system of delivering information from Poland and other Eastern European states to London, useful for British counter-propaganda, did not function above reproach because of the difficulties in getting materials from behind the "Iron Curtain". The information on the political and economic situation and social mood was gathered mainly by members of British diplomatic missions and sent, through special dispatches *Aside* needed by IRD and BBC. Some extra materials were collected from interrogating refugees and exchanging them with the Americans, including RFE. The Foreign Office was keen to get reports from behind the "Iron Curtain" as quickly as possible, even if it were rumours rather than confirmed information. The point was to broadcast as fast as they could every piece of information which was suitable to "explore" the differences between the ruling and the ruled. This, however, did not always end with success, like in the case of the monetary reform in Czechoslovakia in 1953, which surprised the BBC and the station did not manage to react accordingly⁴⁶.

Also, the agencies, which were sending dispatches, did not always determine what part of the text could be made available for the Polish section of the BBC, which, to hide the origin of the message, claimed to have taken it from indeterminate sources in the Federal Republic of Germany. After on 26th September 1953 the Polish Primate, Stefan Wyszyński was arrested by the Security Office, the next day the BBC only reported the summary of the statement of the Polish authorities without any critical commentary, which caused the intervention of the Ambassador Shepherd in London. As it turned out, he himself had not made it clear, which part of the dispatches, sent by him on the subject, was suitable to be used by the BBC. IRD handed over those telegrams to the BBC, and the decision was taken there not to use them even in a limited scope, unlike that which was advised by the former institution. London also received signals that the Vatican was determined to give the case of Primate Wyszyński's arrest as much publicity as possible. It is hardly surprising in the light of the stance of Polish bishops, who seemed lost after his detention by Security. Western diplomats were relatively unani-

⁴⁶ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/614, PRG 102/32, a minute by J. Peck of 25th June 1953, IRD to Prague on 8th July 1953.

mous in their diagnosis which they made at the beginning of 1954 that from that moment onwards, the Polish bishops were not able to maintain resistance against the authorities⁴⁷.

According to the British diplomats from Warsaw, Poland after all remained the country where communism grew weak roots as compared with the USSR. After a couple of years of intense sovietisation it could be, in addition to the Polish resistance, also ascribed to British propaganda activities, where efforts were made to maintain in Poland national and Catholic sense of identity. According to the English, they constituted the roots of Polish nationalism and the source of resistance against the communist regime and the Kremlin's influence⁴⁸.

The arrangements regarding the coordination of British propaganda directed at the USSR and satellite countries were made at least from the end of 1952, during the Eastern European Regional Meetings. Those meetings, even though they were temporarily suspended in the autumn of 1953, were attended by the representatives of IRD, the Northern and Central Departments of the Foreign Office, as well as the BBC. There discussions were held on the reactions in propaganda to current issues, and also the situation in Eastern Europe was analysed from a perspective of the subjects suitable to be used against communist regimes. Towards the end of January 1954, it was acknowledged at one of such meetings, that the conventions of the Polish United Workers' Party (*PZPR*) and the Bulgarian Communist Party most probably did not create such opportunities⁴⁹.

However, 1954 abounded with publicised events, such as: the hijacking of the "Puszczyk" trawler by the part of its crew to Great Britain, or the escape of a Polish sailor, Antoni Klimowicz; such cases were perfectly suitable to be used in propaganda against the *PRL* authorities and promoting the image of Great Britain as the country friendly to Polish common people.

British diplomacy also made sure that those few Englishmen, visiting Poland at that time, were properly prepared. In addition

⁴⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 371/106435, NP 1781/61, Shepherd to FO on 29th September 1953, a minute by H. Hohler of 29th September 1953; FO 1110/689, PR 1055/7, P. H. Scot to R. H. Mason on 15th January 1954.

⁴⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 371106079, N 1016/13, Shepherd to Hohler on 21st December 1953.

⁴⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/586, PRG 45/56, a minute by W. Klatt of 27th March 1953; FO 1110/705, PR 10102, a meeting on 27th January 1954.

to businessmen these were most often the visitors invited by the PRL authorities in order to use their stay for propaganda reasons, which the Foreign Office tried to prevent through warning them in advance directly or through intermediaries. The problem was that the majority of those travellers were communists or their supporters. This sometimes made it rather impossible for the British Government to encourage British visitors to Poland to keep asking, during different meetings, uneasy questions that would be troublesome for the local authorities. Bearing in mind those visitors to Poland who had a bit more critical attitude towards communist reality, in June 1954 the British Embassy prepared an up-to-date list of questions to ask Polish counterparts during a possible visit. Among other things, they were expected to seek out the answer to the question where Primate Wyszyński was being held, what was the purchasing power of teachers' salaries, why the Poles were not allowed to go abroad, why there were checkpoints on roads, and why the BBC programmes were jammed⁵⁰.

Even though the BBC programmes were regarded in Eastern Europe as credible, in the self-critical judgement of British diplomats they were no longer recognised as “the voice of freedom”⁵¹. However, year 1954 brought Western propaganda substantial achievements, though the contribution of the BBC was limited. It was the Americans who could sport the author of the biggest Western propaganda success. The RFE series “Behind the scenes of the security service and party”, with the participation of the runaway Vice-Commander of the Tenth Department in the Ministry for Public Security, colonel Józef Światło, unveiled the secrets of the communist regime and originated the beginning of transformations, whose result was, among other things, the reorganization of the terror apparatus and the ousting of the most compromised members, including Head of this department, Stanisław Radkiewicz⁵².

⁵⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/689, PR 1055/79, P. H. Scott to R. H. Mason on 29th June 1954, Mason to Scott on 5th August 1954.

⁵¹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/705, PR 10102/24, a meeting on 22nd September 1954.

⁵² Among the most diligent listeners to the programmes by Western radio stations were representatives of the repression apparatus. Hipolit Duljasz, Chief Manager of the prison system was trying to listen to the BBC after the meeting chaired by Radkiewicz on the escape of Światło in the autumn of 1954 but “he gave up due to some jamming noises in the radio receiver”, see: A. Górski, *Światłoustęp (Light Intolerance — play on words: “Light” in Polish means światło, transl. note), “Polityka”, 2003, N° 48.*

The Americans were a little aided by a coincidence. It was in their sector in West Berlin that Światło asked for political asylum in December 1953. However, the real success was caused by the decision to use him for anti-communist propaganda, which the British would most probably have had reservations about, had this high-ranking officer been captured by them. What is more, the Foreign Office did not find out about Światło's escape until this fact was revealed by Washington in September 1954, the moment his programme began to be broadcast. After two months, the Ambassador Andrew Noble suggested that the BBC publicised a rumour which was being spread in Warsaw that changes within the PZPR were approaching. Even though the English perceived Światło's revelations as slightly exaggerated, and they had a critical attitude to the practice of disclosing the security agents, who could have been recruited under compulsion, the information which came from the Polish refugee made a perfect material to be used also by the British, since it showed lies by communist regimes, such as, for example, about the brothers, Herman and Noel Fields, who were arrested in 1949 by the Polish and Hungarian security officers, which had been openly denied by the authorities both in Warsaw and Budapest⁵³.

Anti-British propaganda in People's Poland was facilitated by London's policy regarding the remilitarization of West Germany and not recognising the Oder — Lusatian Neisse Line. Sometimes, British politicians themselves encouraged finding pretexts to attack their country. Winston Churchill, while delivering a speech on 23rd November 1954 in his constituency in Woodford, mentioned a telegram which he had allegedly dispatched to the Marshal Bernard Montgomery on the final days of World War II in Europe, instructing him to collect weapons of the defeated Wehrmacht units for German soldiers in case of conflict with Russians. It soon turned out that this was a misunderstanding which resulted from the crippling memory of the 80-year old Head of the Government, and such a telegram had never been sent. The case, however, had already been publicised and used against

⁵³ TNA, PRO, FO 371/111605, NP 1594/3, Noble to FO on 20th September 1954, H. Hohler to I. Kirkpatrick on 22nd November 1954; NP 1594/5, Washington to FO on 9th December 1954; FO 1110/807, PR 1055/14, P. M. Foster to G. Macdonald on 25th January 1955; H. and K. Field, *Opóźniony odlot. W okowach zimnej wojny (A Delayed Flight. The Cold War-Bound)*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 382–420.

Churchill, not only by the PRL propaganda, but also by the opposition on the British Isles⁵⁴. The British usually tried repulsing the attacks by the Soviet satellites, who were accusing them of building a new Wehrmacht, through pointing at the enormity of the Soviet armaments.

Churchill's policy of seeking a consensus with the USSR had no impact on the fundamentals of British propaganda towards PRL. The British, in their search for detente with communist states reserved, until 1956, room at the negotiating table for Moscow only, since they did not want the contacts with its vassals to gain importance. However, the slow thaw in Poland caused in 1955 less friction in bilateral relations, which also diminished confrontational atmosphere in propaganda warfare. A decisive moment for a new phase in the British information activities was the visit of the HMS "Glasgow" cruiser to the port of Gdynia between 1st and 4th July 1955. For the first time after the World War II had ended, the cameras of the British film chronicle found themselves in Poland, showing its friendly face and avoiding attacks on the communist regime. On the other hand, also Polish propaganda began to reduce the number of attacks on Great Britain and France, concentrating its efforts on the USA and West Germany⁵⁵.

Before the conference of the leaders of Great Britain, France, the USA and USSR in Geneva was held in the second part of July 1955, the Americans were less and less certain about the policy of their allies towards the satellites. Although the British propaganda principles did not differ much from the American ones, being reduced to highlighting differences between the ruling and their nations as well as the pointing at the contradiction of interests between the enslaved countries and the USSR, in reality the tone of the programmes in the Polish section of the BBC was far more cautious than of RFE. While the Munich radio station was forbidden from inciting uprisings and creating illusions to

⁵⁴ TNA, PRO, FO 371/111578, NP 1021/4, Noble to A. Eden on 7th December 1954; M. Gilbert, *"Never Despair"*. *Winston S. Churchill 1945–1965*, London 1988, pp. 1070–1072; IRD prepared a study for a secret distribution, entitled *Communist statements on the Oder–Neisse Line*, where, ignoring the role of Great Britain and the USA, they put blame on the Polish government for post-war expulsions of Germans, TNA, PRO, FO 953/93.

⁵⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955–1957* (quoted below as: FRUS), vol. XXV: *Eastern Europe*. Washington 1990, pp. 42–43; Gdynia, *Poles Welcome HMS "Glasgow"*, 11th July 1955, Pathe News Exclusive, www.britishpathe.com.

rely on possible aid of the West in liberating from the communist rule, hot-blooded journalists did not always comply with it, and the National Committee for a Free Europe itself led, from February 1955 onwards, an aggressive balloon action of dropping leaflets and brochures on the territory of Poland, among others, yet its scale was much smaller than the operation addressed to Czechoslovakia and Hungary⁵⁶.

During the talks held by Western diplomats before the Geneva conference, the British, just like the French, showed to the disappointment of the Americans lack of willingness to put the case of independence for satellite states on the agenda at the meeting with the USSR. In London the illusions about the possibility of their liberation were rather abandoned, and the authorities there suggested the beginning of talks on the exchange of ideas and people with the states of the Soviet block, so in practice, the permission for Western information activities on its territory, hoping that this would cause evolutionary transformations in communist capitals⁵⁷.

As anticipated by the British, on 18th July 1955, during the Geneva conference President Eisenhower mentioned the case of bringing back independence to the countries of Eastern Europe, but he encountered a refusal to take up the subject by the USSR Prime Minister, Nikolai Bulgagin. The Russian politician regarded this as interfering in internal affairs of the states of the people's democracy⁵⁸. The Geneva conference and a certain detente in the relations with Moscow, which took place after that, put new requirements for Western propaganda towards those countries, because the recipients of Western propaganda may have got the impression that they had been sacrificed on the altar of the agreement with the Kremlin.

The authorities of PRL took advantage of such international atmosphere to begin, after the Geneva conference, a new propaganda campaign in which they called Poles — emigrants in the

⁵⁶ J. Nowak-Jeziorański, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103, 152–165; P. Machcewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–122; the IRD experts estimated that the effectiveness of RFE had increased as compared to 1952, though they suggested another location for the station as the Polish and Czech personnel did not feel comfortable in Bavaria. TNA, PRO, FO 1110/743, PR 134/18, Bruce Lockhard to J. Rennie on 24th July 1955.

⁵⁷ FRUS, vol. XXV: *Eastern Europe*, Washington 1990, p. 46.

⁵⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 371/118248, WG 1071/1254, the Geneva Conference, talks on 18th July 1955.

Western world — to come back home. The action was primarily focused on bringing back to Poland outstanding representatives of scholarly and cultural life. The British did not rely in their propaganda on emigrants as much as the Americans, hence the damage done by the campaigns was limited. The British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was rather afraid of the returns of people who had sought political asylum not long before, which could discourage other would-be refugees, who would possess the information required by the intelligence. The British counter-action was, as compared to the USA's, rather timid, and limited itself to hampering through administrative methods more active operations of the PRL Embassy. The political mood among the majority of the Polish diaspora in the British Isles made it difficult to achieve quantitative repatriation successes, though it was there where the most spectacular returns to Poland of the two Prime Minister of the Government-in-Exile took place. While Hugon Hanke, as it turned out later — an agent of the Security Office, left secretly for Warsaw in September 1955, whereas the eminent publicist, Stanisław Cat Mackiewicz did the same publicly the next year. Western radio stations, first of all RFE, responded to this with a clever counter-offensive, demanding the repatriation of the Poles from the USSR⁵⁹.

The English, however, preferred to remain discreet in some matters, such as the fate of the sixteen leaders of the Polish underground, kidnapped by the NKVD in March 1945, relying on the methods of silent diplomacy, rather than publicising the question. After all, they had a similar approach to the problem of the British wives of the Polish citizens who had come back from England to their country after the war. A number of them, disappointed with the communist reality, made attempts to return to Great Britain, but the Polish authorities objected, since they regarded them to be Polish citizens and refused to grant them permission to leave the country⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ M. Ruchniewicz, *MSZ i polskie placówki dyplomatyczne w kampanii na rzecz repatriacji Polaków z Zachodu (1955–1957) (The Polish Foreign Ministry and Polish Diplomatic Posts in the Campaign for the Repatriation of Poles from the West, 1955–1957)*, "Wrocławskie Studia z Polityki Zagranicznej", 2001, N° 1, pp. 61–81; A. Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji (A Political Life in Exile)*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 232–241; P. Machciewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–136.

⁶⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 371/116519, NP 1052/2, Noble to Hohler on 29th March 1955; NP 1052/5, a minute by Hohler of July 1955.

The progressing political thaw in Poland in the second half of 1955 made it possible for British diplomats to maintain slightly more uninhibited contacts with the Poles. Also, in the Polish press more and more critical articles appeared, which facilitated finding the useful material on the Polish reality, which was handed over to London for the BBC and IRD, as these institutions were able to react to ongoing changes relatively fast. What remained problematic was the fact that it would be difficult to change the principles in propaganda towards Poland, trying to adjust them to a dynamically developing situation without modifying the British policy towards the Polish authorities. Meanwhile, a discussion had been taking place since the end of 1954 between the Ambassador in Warsaw, Andrew Noble, and the Foreign Office, where the British diplomat suggested accepting a more open attitude towards the Polish authorities, yet encountering scepticism in his headquarters. This exchange of opinion did not produce conclusions even at the beginning of 1956, before the meeting between Churchill's successor as Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, and Eisenhower in Washington. During this summit at the turn of January 1956, Poland was only mentioned in the context of the economic expansion of communist states in the Third World, slightly exaggerating its threat, and the participants issued with satisfaction a general statement in which they recalled the rights of nations subjugated in Eastern Europe to sovereignty⁶¹.

In February 1956, the Foreign Office was contemplating a possible tightening of propaganda towards USSR in the situation when the Russians intensified their criticism about Western powers. This induced Ambassador Noble to express his objection to any ideas of implementing this tactic by British propaganda towards the PRL authorities, because the Poles did not follow Moscow in this case. After his conversation with the Polish vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Józef Winiewicz, he suggested, following the Polish diplomat, calling a far-reaching truce on this issue between London and Warsaw. According to the British diplomat, it was recommended to cease criticism by the BBC of the Polish ruling regime in return for not-jamming the station, which was in consequence to improve mutual relations. A month

⁶¹ TNA, CAB 21/3090, a conversation between S. Lloyd and J. F. Dulles on 1st February 1956, the Washington Declaration of 1st February 1956.

later, the British Ambassador showed, as an example of the Polish moderation in criticising the United Kingdom, the reactions of the *PRL* press to arresting by the British authorities in Cyprus the leader of the Greek community, Archbishop Makarios, and his deportation to the Seychelles⁶².

The arguments introduced by Noble were not, however, strong enough to break the resistance in London, where no differences were noticed between anti-Western propaganda of *PRL* and the USSR, and the fundamentals in the policy towards the transformations on the Vistula still waited to be determined. In the Foreign Office a plan was being considered to initiate the policy of small steps through appealing to Warsaw for permission to restore the contacts between the British Council and Polish institutions of higher education, the arrival of Western journalists in Poland and sales of English books. Yet even those initiatives were effectively hampered by the lack of funds⁶³.

After the 20th Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)'s Congress, the British, not knowing the content of the secret report by Krushchev at that stage, judged the policy of Moscow through the prism of its propaganda attacks against the West, which were plentiful at the time of the congress. It was not noticed in London either that *PRL* distanced itself from the Kremlin's stance. In the letter of the Deputy Undersecretary of State, John G. Ward to Noble of 12th March 1956 an idea to stop criticising the regime by the BBC in return for not jamming the broadcast was rejected, as it was acknowledged that such a move would completely disorientate Polish listeners of this radio station as regards the British policy towards communist regimes. In reply, the British Ambassador claimed that he did not mean giving up the attacks on communism as a doctrine but sparing the Polish government⁶⁴.

The changes which began to progress more dynamically after Bolesław Bierut's death in Moscow on 12th March 1956 and after the secret report by Khrushchev was carried over in the months that followed, confirmed Noble's projections that Poland was

⁶² TNA, PRO, FO 371/122617, NP 1052/3, Noble to S. Lloyd on 17th February 1956; FO 371/123877, RG 1081/523, Noble to Lloyd 13th March 1956.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, a minute by H. G. Balfour-Paul of 28th February 1956; NP 1052/4, a minute by E. F. Given of 1st March 1956.

⁶⁴ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122617, NP 1052/5, J. G. Ward to Noble on 12th March 1956; NP 1052/8, Noble to Ward on 20th March 1956.

becoming a country increasingly different from other states of the communist block. An important switch in the policy of the *PRL* authorities was to give up the jamming of Polish broadcasts by the BBC towards the end of June 1956. Just before the Poznań riots, a regime journalist and earlier a war correspondent of the Polish Telegraph Agency (*PAT*), Stefan Litauer notified the BBC unofficially that in Warsaw such a decision had been taken, which was received by the British with satisfaction. The fact that it was done without getting satisfaction as regards the original postulate to stop criticising the authorities, confirmed that the Polish government attached little importance to a possible threat from the Polish programmes of the BBC, focusing their efforts on jamming the much more dangerous RFE, even though, according to what Jan Nowak Jeziorański used to say to British diplomats, the Munich radio station tried maintaining the spirit of hope but not the hope for liberation⁶⁵.

The spontaneous revolt against the communist regime in Poznań of 28th June 1956, which was quelled by the army with the death toll of over 70 people, was the biggest riot of its type in a hitherto short history of *PRL* and became a dream propaganda material for Polish language Western radio stations. While RFE took advantage of the situation for a concentrated propaganda attack against the authorities in Warsaw, whereas the English remained more timid, limiting themselves mostly to giving an account of the course of events in Poznań, which were witnessed by hundreds of guests of the Poznań Fair who arrived from Western Europe. The differences in the attitude of London and Washington towards the events in Poznań basically stemmed from a more aggressive approach of the Americans, though — in their opinion — the Poznań events lacked one significant element, which would be the quelling of the revolt directly by Soviet military forces. The British were far from making an offer to supply food for the inhabitants of Poznań, as that had been carried out by the USA assuming in advance, which was emphasised by the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, at the meeting of the National Security Council on 12th July 1956, that the offer would be rejected, and its aim was merely to put the *PRL* authorities in an awkward position⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122647, NP 1152/5, Noble to Ward on 26th June 1956; FO 371/122617, NP 1052/4, a minute by E. F. Given of 1st March 1956.

A noticeable change of the atmosphere in Polish — British relations was proven by the fact that Józef Winiewicz thanked Noble on 1st August 1956 for the careful line that the British Foreign Ministry, followed by the press, adopted with reference to the Poznań events, and made an assurance that the sentences in trials would not be “brutal”. Despite the rumour which was spread as far as the Foreign Office, the jamming of the programmes of the Polish section of the BBC was not resumed, which towards the end of the summer 1956, according to British diplomats, were received without any interference⁶⁷.

The PRL authorities, however, carried on jamming American radio stations which broadcast to Poland. In spite of a good British — American cooperation in the field of propaganda, the Northern Department of Foreign Office was rather sceptical about RFE. It was largely caused by a more moderate attitude of London towards satellite states. Towards the close of August 1956, a request of the Munich station was being contemplated, to let the Chancellor of the Treasury, Harold Macmillan take the floor in the programme on a Czech politician, Jan Masaryk. Despite the support given by Norman G. F. Reddaway from IRD, voices prevailed which suggested that it was the BBC where the Ministers of the Crown should turn up, and the invitation was declined. Thomas Brimelow of the Northern Department expressed an opinion that RFE was a friend, but “it is at times an embarrassing friend”⁶⁸.

In September 1956 the British did not intend, however, to change their political line towards Poland and other satellites, though they discerned the necessity to react with flexibility to ongoing changes. In the field of propaganda they still wanted to show the Polish nation heart and stress the need for Poland to regain independence. Contrary to Noble's suggestions, who after all had ceased to be Ambassador in Warsaw, there was no intention of spending money on the cultural presentation of Great

⁶⁶ The 290th NSC session on 12th July 1956, National Security Archive, The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, www.gwu.edu/~7Ensarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB76/; on the response to the events in Poznań in the British media see: S. Jan k o w i a k, *Reakcja Zachodu na Poznański Czerwiec 1956 r. (The Reaction of the West to the Poznań June of 1956)*, “Kronika Wielkopolska”, 1993, N^o 3, pp. 31–53.

⁶⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122587, NP 1015/8, Noble to Lloyd on 1st August 1956; FO 1110/854, PR 138/60, P. M. Foster to C. Higgs on 24th July 1956.

⁶⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122108, N 1431/1, a minute by Brimelow of 29th August 1956, a minute by Reddaway of 29th August 1956.

Britain in Poland, assuming that the Polish government would let them take place at all⁶⁹.

This cautious policy was soon called in question by the October events in Poland, which reached their climax on 21st October 1956, when Władysław Gomułka assumed the office of First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The authorities in London did not keep up with the developments in Warsaw, because the attention of British diplomats was drawn by the Suez Crisis. The Foreign Office was wary of the events in Poland. On 22nd October 1956, its spokesperson stated "We have always wished well to the Polish people. We shall be glad if the reforms proposed by Mr. Gomułka lead to greater freedom for them". The British press showed its understanding for this political line towards Poland⁷⁰.

British diplomats, just like Americans, appreciated the importance for the interests of their countries of the creation in Poland of a "national communist regime". Hope for a quick liberation of Poland from the Soviet dependence was given up, and some counted on the process of an evolutionary transformation, which they intended to support. October 1956 was a breakthrough in British propaganda towards Poland. The development of relations with the communist regime meant the necessity to tone down the critical attitude towards it, and for the next few years Gomułka himself was to enjoy characteristic immunity in programmes of the Polish section of the BBC, which entailed the ban on criticising him⁷¹.

⁶⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122618, NP 1052/19, a memorandum by Brimelow of 24th September 1956.

⁷⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 371/122600, NP 10110/197, a minute by Brimelow of 23rd October 1956. The fact that Western press correspondents, including British, could perform their jobs in post-October 1956 Poland mostly unhindered did not indicate that they did not encounter difficulties, especially when they annoyed the PRL authorities with their activities and reports. On 12th August 1957, an Englishman Anthony Cavendish, a correspondent of the UP American information agency, visited Łódź and next sent a report on the strike of textile female workers in that town. In addition to this, he wrote a letter of protest to Vice-Minister of Polish Foreign Ministry, Józef Winiewicz, having been previously irritated by the surveillance of his actions from the Security Service. The reaction of the Polish authorities was to expel him from Poland. On principle, the Security Service suspected every foreign journalist of spying, but in this case it was not of any larger importance, though Cavendish indeed worked for SIS. In the British Embassy in Warsaw, where, except for head of the local SIS cell, most probably nobody else knew about his secret profession, the information he handed over through ordinary contacts was not regarded as highly credible and he was perceived as an indiscreet person, see: TNA, PRO, FO 371/128875, NP 1674/2, G. Carey-Foster to M. G. L. Joy on 20th August 1957.

To what extent the situation had changed was showed by the fact that Gomułka, encouraged by Winiewicz, gave an interview to "The Times" in 1958. In the conversation with Józef Żarański of the BBC, whom he used to meet publicly, the Polish Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasised that this radio station played a positive role in bilateral relations and it did not give reasons to complain⁷². Despite some minor incidents in the next years, this situation did not change till 1967, irrespective of different crises in the relations between the East and the West. This did not indicate, however, that the British gave up their anti-communist propaganda, quite the contrary: they constituted, in addition to the USA, a major component of the Western coalition to stop the ideological and propaganda expansion of communism all over the world. It was not until an anti-Zionist campaign was started by the PRL authorities after the Six-Day-War, and first of all, the Polish participation in the invasion on Czechoslovakia in August 1968, that a transitional crisis in British — Polish relations took place, which was reflected in the temporary intensification of propaganda actions.

Translated by Robert Bubczyk

⁷¹ TNA, PRO, FO 1110/1141, PR 1055/31, a minute by T. Peters of 4th July 1958; J. Tebinka, *Brytyjskie zapewnienia w sprawie granicy na Odrze i Nysie Łużyckiej z 1962 roku (British Assurances Regarding the Oder-Lusatian Neisse Line)*, in: *Gdańsk — Gdynia — Europa — Stany Zjednoczone w XIX i XX wieku. Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana prof. A. Cienciale (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Europe-the USA in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Commemorative Book Dedicated to Professor A. Cienciale)*, Gdańsk 2000, pp. 322–325; J. Tyszkiewicz, *Otwarte okno w "żelaznej kurtynie". Polityka administracji prezydenta Eisenhowera wobec Polski (październik 1956–styczeń 1961) (An Open Window in the "Iron Curtain". The Policy of President Eisenhower's Administration Towards Poland, October 1956–January 1961)*, Wrocław, 2003, pp. 312–319.

⁷² TNA, PRO, FO 371/135078, NP 1051/9, a conversation between Żarański and Winiewicz on 10th April 1958.