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SOME REMARKS ON THE REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN POLAND

Strictly speaking, the present state of research in the history of the resistance movement in Poland does not, as yet, provide sufficient material for detailed considerations on its specific features and regional differences. In order to depict the present state of knowledge, let us recall the administrative divisions of Poland in 1938, with the assumption that an administrative unit is also a region of a kind.¹ In 1938, Poland was administratively divided into 16 big units—the voivodships, with their respective capitals (proceeding from the west to the east) in: Toruń (the capital of Pomerania), Poznań (the capital of Great-Poland), Łódź, Katowice (the capital of prewar Polish Silesia), Warsaw, Kielce, Cracow, Białystok, Lublin, Lwów, Wilno, Nowogródek, Brześć-on-Bug, Łuck, Tarnopol and Stanisławów. The eastern voivodships (Wilno, Nowogródek, a part of Białystok Voivodship, Brześć, Łuck, Tarnopol, a major part of Lwów Voivodship, and Stanisławów) were incorporated in the USSR in the autumn of 1939 and, after 1941, they were occupied by Germany. In a part of these territories (Wilno and vicinity, the region north of Łuck, and Lwów and vicinity), an armed Polish resistance movement developed in the last stages of the war on quite a large scale. However, in considera-

¹ We are not entering into terminological disputes. In the broadest sense of the term, a region is an area differing from adjacent territories by some feature or set of features. We are aware of the fact that a characterization of regional differences in the resistance movement would require recalling physical and geographical, economic and administrative regions in their historical development, etc. In the conditions of the occupation, certain regional characteristics important to the resistance movement did not change — e.g. the physical configuration of the country; on the other hand, the course of military events and the policy of the occupation authorities resulted sometimes in the emergence of quite new regional differences, etc.

tion of the present state of research, I shall confine my remarks to the area of the prewar Central, Northern and Western Poland.

The relatively most impressive is the number of works devoted to the Kielce region.² As regards the very important Lublin region (where the biggest partisan battles were fought in 1944), a considerable amount of source material concerning the activities of the People's Guard (GL) and the People's Army (AL), the Peasant Battalions (BCh) and the Home Army (AK),³ as well as some minor historical contributions have been published. No comprehensive monograph has appeared so far, though. The resistance movement in the Voivodship of Warsaw has been the subject of a dozen or so papers published in scientific journals and of a number of memoirs. The first attempt at presenting and evaluating these problems as a whole is only now being prepared. Neither has as yet appeared a monograph of the resistance movement in the Voivodship of Cracow although research concerning the mountain region, adjacent to Czechoslovakia, has already made considerable progress. Even more modest is the historiographic production dealing with the anti-Nazi underground in Silesia and in the Voivodship of Łódź.⁴ On the other hand, the appearance of a comprehensive study on Great-Poland gives reason to satisfaction.⁵ Also expected to appear in the nearest future is a monograph on the resistance movement in Pomerania.

In this perfunctory review, we have left out Warsaw which was unquestionably in the van of all Poland in underground activities. Extensive research conducted for some years already (and concerning not only, and even not predominantly, the problems of the Warsaw Uprising) permits to expect within a short time that we shall get a solid, scientific synthesis of the underground Warsaw. Yet research on the regional scale, while extremely important, is not the only element in the

² Among the most important works are: B. Hillebrandt, *Partyzantka na Kielecczyźnie 1939 - 1945* [*Partisan Warfare in the Kielce Region 1939 - 1945*], Warszawa 1967; W. Waźniewski, *Walki partyzanckie nad Nidą 1939 - 1945* [*Partisan Struggles on the River Nida 1939 - 1945*], Warszawa 1969; R. Nazarewicz, *Nad górną Wartą i Pilicą* [*On the Upper Warta and the Pilica*], Warszawa 1964 (on the bordering area of the regions of Kielce and Łódź).

³ The most important and scientifically most thorough work was published in Lublin in 1971: I. Caban, Z. Mańkowski, *Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w okręgu lubelskim 1939 - 1944* [*The Union of Armed Struggle and the Home Army in the Region of Lublin 1939 - 1944*], vol. 1 - 2.

⁴ A monograph on the occupation problems of Łódź was written by M. Cygański: *Z dziejów okupacji hitlerowskiej w Łodzi 1939 - 1945* [*From the History of the Nazi Occupation in Łódź 1939 - 1945*], Łódź 1965.

⁵ E. Serwański, *Wielkopolska w cieniu swastyki* [*Great-Poland in the Shadow of the Swastika*], Warszawa 1970.

problem of acquiring knowledge of the problem as a whole. Of utmost importance in this respect is research aimed at reconstructing the history of nation-wide underground organizations. It also seems to me that a reasonable investigation of the forms of struggle that were used, comprehensive monographs on for example partisan warfare or underground education, would be the third element bringing us closer to a general picture of the history of Polish resistance movement. For the time being, however, we can only speak of the beginnings of research in main underground organizations,⁶ let alone of an analysis of the various forms of struggle, among which only underground education has been the subject of numerous works, for the most part of a regional scope or dealing exclusively with underground institutions of higher learning. It is not without good reason that I recall all this. After all, it is clear that the manner and scope of any considerations is strictly connected with the already achieved scope and standard of research along all possible lines. This determines the character of the present paper which only points to a few questions within the broad problem indicated in its title. In order to avoid possible misunderstandings, I deem it necessary to explain that my purpose is not to grasp regional peculiarities (in the relation of certain phenomena to others) but at most to attempt a preliminary outline of certain conditions of development of the resistance movement, and of the place of the given region on the general map of the Polish resistance movement.

I believe that a full characterization of a region from the point of view of the problems discussed here should include a description of the natural conditions (the conditions most favourable to guerilla war existed, above all, in parts of the Lublin and Kielce Voivodship and in the southern regions of the Cracow Voivodship), of the infrastructure (in industrialized Silesia, the transportation network and the high degree of urbanization,⁷ not to mention other factors, caused immense difficulties to the organizers of fighting groups), of the nationality structure (the presence of German minority in Silesia, Łódź or Pomerania, made the struggle of the occupation authorities against the Polish element, considerably easier), of the

⁶ A few works have been devoted to the history of the Polish Workers' Party but a comprehensive picture is still missing. The situation is similar with regard to the peasant movement. A complete gap exists as far as research in the Socialist movement is concerned. For institutions of the underground connected with the Polish Government-in-exile, see: E. Duraczyński, *Stosunki w kierownictwie podziemia londyńskiego* [Relations in the Leadership of the "London" Underground Movement], Warszawa 1966. For the underground National Party, see: J. Terej, *Polityka i rzeczywistość* [Politics and Reality], Warszawa 1971.

⁷ West-European historians are pointing to the importance of this factor for the resistance movement in France, Belgium, Holland.

existing traditions, especially the tradition of the struggle for independence, etc.

Further factors conditioning the resistance movement were connected with the war and the policy of the 3rd Reich in occupied Poland. Fragmentary detailed research seems to indicate a relationship between the battles of the defensive campaign of 1939 and the subsequent



Map 1: Poland in 1938 (according to *Wielka encyklopedia powszechna*)

development of armed resistance movement. For example in the Voivodships of Lublin and Kielce, the local population, especially rural, collected from the fields of battle quite a large number of arms and hid them; in the years that followed, the arms from the 1939 campaign became more than once the initial armament of the first fighting groups and units. That relationship should not be overestimated, though. The policy of the occupation authorities, on the other hand, played an immense role in



Map 2: Poland under German Occupation, 1942 - 1943

conditioning the resistance movement. I shall intentionally leave out here the question of the biological extermination of the Polish people and dwell on certain other factors.

On the strength of Hitler's decree of 8 October 1939, the Reich—in contravention of the international law—annexed the territories of prewar Northern and Western Poland. The northern part of Mazovia and the counties of Suwałki and Augustów were incorporated into East Prussia. Pomerania, together with Gdańsk, became the territorially basic area of the newly-established Gdańsk—West Prussia province (*Gau Danzig-Westpreussen*). Upper Silesia, the Dąbrowa Basin and four western counties of the Voivodship of Cracow were incorporated into *Gau Schlesien* (prewar German Silesia). The Voivodship of Poznań and several counties of the Voivodship of Łódź, Pomerania and Warsaw made up the so-called Warta Land (*Wartheland* or *Warthegau*). In the remaining part of occupied Poland, the occupation authorities established, on the strength of Hitler's decree, the so-called *Generalgouvernement* (abbr. GG). Its eastern frontier ran from Ostrołęka in the north, along the river Bug, then westwards to the river San at the estuary of the Wisłok, and southwards along the San (at the same time, the eastern frontier of the GG constituted the frontier line established by the German-Soviet treaty of 28 September 1939). Until the summer of 1941, the GG was divided into four districts (*Distrikt*): Cracow, Lublin, Radom and Warsaw. (While remaining fully aware of the provisional character of the administrative divisions imposed by the Reich in the so-called GG, we shall, for the sake of convenience, use the term "District" in our further considerations). After the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the District of Galicia was formed (the prewar Voivodship of Lwów, Stanisławów and Tarnopol) but we do not propose to deal with its history here. The authorities of the GG chose Cracow for their seat.⁸

The decisions, briefly mentioned above, resulted not only in a basic change of the administrative divisions. The incorporation of the prewar western and northern territories into the Reich was tantamount to cutting them off from the Central Poland by a well-guarded frontier. The changes in administrative divisions and the new frontiers must certainly be considered as factors impeding the development of underground activities. For example, the so-called Regency of Katowice was at first separated from the GG by a triple frontier: a customs frontier running along the boundary of the Regency, a passport frontier identical

⁸ A comprehensive analysis of the policy of the 3rd Reich in occupied Poland is to be found in: C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce* [*The Policy of the 3rd Reich in Occupied Poland*], vol. 1 - 2, Warszawa 1970.

with the course of the German frontier of 1914, and a police frontier identical with the German frontier of 1939. A similar "technique" of dividing the country by various frontier lines was used by the Germans in France in 1940, after the defeat of France in June of that year.⁹

The separation by a frontier of the territories incorporated to the Reich from prewar Central Poland (the GG) was of particular importance to the problems that interest us here. The main forces of the Polish resistance movement were concentrated in the so-called GG, with the headquarters of the underground political centres and of the military staffs in Warsaw. The carefully guarded frontier isolated the resistance movement in the incorporated territories from its main centre and made it difficult for the Warsaw underground headquarters to organize communications, material supplies, the circulation of the underground press, etc.

The extensive system of imposed restrictions had a direct impact on the conditions of underground activities in the territories incorporated to the Reich. In Łódź, Poland's second biggest city, the occupation authorities barred Poles from cafés, restaurants, theatres, most cinemas, public parks, beaches, swimming-pools, etc. In the entire so-called Warta Land, Poles could use railway and bus transportation exclusively on a special permission of the police authorities. From 1941, a number of regulations were introduced, restricting the use of bicycles by Poles (a bicycle licence could be obtained only by those Poles whose home was at least 2 km. distant from their place of work; the bearer of a licence was allowed to move only along a fixed route and his bicycle had to be marked in a special way). Such prohibitions—of which we have cited a few by way of example—restricted very considerably the possibilities of contacts and rendered difficult underground communications, thus impeding key elements of the "technique" of underground work.

If we look at the results of the policy of the occupation authorities from the point of view of the conditions for the development of the resistance movement, we shall conclude that the Warta Land was subjected the most strictly to the German control, while Pomerania and Silesia were the most effectively isolated from the rest of the country.

However, the characterization of the conditions under which the resistance movement developed in the incorporated territories, requires recalling certain further elements of the occupation policy.

One of the first undertakings of the German authorities was the action of the physical extermination of the Polish intelligentsia (indeed, the

⁹ The French historian H. Michel has written on several occasions about the consequences of this policy for the development of the French resistance movement.

programme of destroying the intelligentsia was being carried out in the entire Polish territory occupied by the 3rd Reich). That action was carried through with particular consistence in Pomerania. The so-called *Intelligenzaktion* (i.e. the programme of extermination of the intelligentsia and of the Polish leading groups and classes in Pomerania) affected teachers, lawyers, doctors, priests, administration personnel, active members of various civic, political, cultural and educational organizations.¹⁰

The actions of the German occupation authorities resulted ultimately in the extermination of thousands of people from the intelligentsia who had been active in the northern and western territories of Poland before the war. The extermination of the intelligentsia and of the politically active Polish element weakened very considerably the potential at the disposal of those who organized underground resistance (especially in Pomerania)—which was just the goal that Berlin set before the occupation authorities.

Strictly connected with that were the massive expulsions although they were aimed not only at weakening the Polish element but also at facilitating the Germanization of the incorporated territories (among other means, by German colonization). It is estimated that the expulsions which were started in October 1939 and continued until 1944, affected more than 800 thousand Poles living in the incorporated territories (from Łódź alone, some 40 thousand Poles were expelled to the GG in the years 1939 - 1943). It is true that people deported for example from Great-Poland, often reinforced the resistance movement in the GG; all the same, the expulsion programme was, beside the extermination of the leading class, the other element of the German policy that weakened the potential of the Polish underground in the territories incorporated to the Reich. Thus, for example, the President of the Opole Regency (which also included prewar Polish territories)), in a report from the beginning of 1943, after describing the successes achieved in the struggle against the Polish resistance movement, stated: "It is now evident how advantageous was the fact that Polish intelligentsia has almost totally disappeared from this area."¹¹

¹⁰ D. Steyer, *Eksterminacja ludności polskiej na Pomorzu Gdańskim w latach 1939 - 1945* [*The Extermination of the Polish Population in Gdańsk Pomerania in the Years 1939 - 1945*], Gdynia 1967. For a similar material concerning Great-Poland, see: *Dyskryminacja Polaków w Wielkopolsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Wybór źródeł* [*The Discrimination of the Poles in Great-Poland in the Period of Nazi Occupation. A Selection of Sources*], selected and edited by C. Łuczak, Poznań 1966.

¹¹ K. Popiołek, *Śląsk w oczach okupanta* [*Silesia in the Eyes of the Occupants*], Katowice 1960, p. 175.

In the complex of conditions the policy of the 3rd Reich created in the incorporated territories, a special role was played by the so-called nationality list (*Deutsche Volksliste*) which comprised four categories of people.¹² The first and second group of the German Nationality List included Polish citizens who had been active in the interests of Germany before the war or claimed German descent. Those acquired the German citizenship. The third and fourth included people of Polish nationality upon whom German nationality was imposed either on grounds of relationship or of a German-sounding family name, and frequently without even such justification. The action of entering people on the German Nationality List assumed the greatest intensity in Pomerania and in Silesia. A consequence of being entered on the list, was the compulsory enlistment of men in the Wehrmacht.

The presence of a strong German element in Silesia or Pomerania, and the establishment of the German Nationality List, made easier the German penetration among the Poles and paralyzed the activities of the Polish underground by creating various barriers, including the psychological barrier of major importance (especially between the Polish underground movement and those citizens who, under the pressure of various circumstances, had accepted to be entered into the 3rd or 4th group of the German Nationality List). Finally, recruitment to the Wehrmacht also limited the possibilities of expansion of the resistance movement by tearing away the best classes from the ranks of potential underground fighters.

The extermination, the expulsions, the German Nationality List, the prospect of being enrolled in the Wehrmacht, produced one more factor that weakened the potential of underground activities in the incorporated territories. In the feeling of imminent personal danger, considerable numbers of inhabitants of Great-Poland, Silesia, Pomerania — mainly from the intelligentsia and from among the civic and political leaders — sought refuge in the territory of the GG (a large percentage of them in Warsaw). Many young men from Pomerania or Silesia, threatened with impressment into the Wehrmacht, also crossed the border. Finally, moving to the GG were active members of the underground movement, for the most part compelled to take that step by the unmasking of their organizational networks.

To sum up: the isolation from the GG (the strictest in Pomerania and Silesia), the decimation of the cadres of leaders and organizers (again the most severe in Pomerania and Silesia), and the weakening of the

¹² This problem is discussed extensively in the above-cited work by C. Madajczyk.

general potential of the resistance movement, were the decisive factors in shaping the specific conditions and features of the Polish anti-Nazi underground movement in the incorporated territories.

As has already been mentioned, the so called *Generalgouvernement* was the basic area of particularly intensive activities of the Polish resistance movement. It was in the GG that the main forces of the anti-Nazi underground were to be found. There too, the natural conditions favoured the development of the partisan (guerrilla) forces. In connection with the latter statement, I would like to remark that not always and not everywhere does a simple interdependence appear between advantageous natural conditions and the actual proportions of partisan warfare.¹⁸ Thus, for example, the natural configuration in the so-called District of Cracow was theoretically favourable to the development of partisan war (especially in the territories between the Carpathian Mountains and the rivers Vistula and San). Yet certain consequences of the occupation created conditions restraining such development in that area. Because of the role of Cracow as the seat of the supreme German authorities in the GG, and of various central organs of the occupation apparatus, the military and police forces stationing in the District of Cracow were much more numerous than those in the other Districts. Moreover, considerable areas in that District were turned into military camps, artillery ranges, training centres, rest centres, army estates, etc. On the other hand, in the south-eastern mountainous part of the District (the Bieszczady region), strong anti-Polish activities were deployed by Ukrainian nationalists. As a result, that very convenient region, perfectly suitable for partisan bases, could hardly be used on a larger scale by the Polish partisan forces.

In the District of Radom (the occupation authorities abolished the prewar Voivodship of Kielce; the District of Radom comprised the area of Kielce Voivodship and the eastern part of the Łódź Voivodship), the natural conditions were also advantageous for a partisan war. Yet there, in the vicinity of Radom, the Germans also established army estates, firing ranges and training camps. That hampered the development of partisan activities.

As regards the District of Warsaw, it can be considered as an area with conditions unfavourable to partisan actions (Warsaw and the metropolitan region were the biggest industrial centre in the GG, and the Warsaw railway junction was of a paramount military and strategic importance. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, in the opinion

¹⁸ The natural conditions in the four districts of the GG from the point of view of the development of the partisan movement are discussed in: J. B. Garas, *Oddziały Gwardii Ludowej i Armii Ludowej 1942 - 1945* [*The Units of the People's Guard and the People's Army 1942 - 1945*], Warszawa 1971.

of the German authorities Warsaw became the sally-port against the East). Yet Poland's capital city, with its immense concentration of underground political and military forces, imparted dynamism to the anti-Nazi underground in the whole District. And while the District of Warsaw was not equal to those of Lublin or Kielce in the extent of partisan war, it was second to neither in other underground activities, and in some respects it was even superior (e.g. in the development of underground education).

As I have already mentioned, a description of the conditions in which the resistance movement developed, should include a characterization of nationality relations. This is a vast subject that we have only touched upon in the fragment dealing with the incorporated territories. It can generally be stated that in the overwhelming part of the GG, the Poles and the Germans were clearly separated. In the GG, the German population accounted for an insignificant percentage while in Silesia and Pomerania the two elements: Polish and German, were interpenetrated. We have already noted the negative effects of that situation on the resistance movement in the incorporated territories. Its advantages for the anti-Nazi underground in the GG are so obvious that no comment is necessary.

In the complex of conditions determining the development of the resistance movement, a certain role was also played by the place assigned to the given region in the plans of the underground military organizations. For example, it is well known that already from 1940 the commanding staff of the Home Army¹⁴ were preparing detailed plans for a general armed rising. According to those plans, Central Poland (or, roughly speaking, the *Generalgouvernement*), was to be the main area of insurgent operations. Hence, for example Pomerania played a minor role in the strategic plans of the Supreme Command of the Home Army. The consequences were obvious: no drops of arms from the West, almost no transfers of officers from the GG, etc. Quite a different role in the plans of the underground organizations was assigned for example to the Lublin Voivodship. In the spring and summer of 1944, the Command of the People's Army¹⁵ paid a special attention to the areas which were, or could become in the nearest future, the immediate rear of the front (the

¹⁴ The Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) — underground military organization established on 14 February 1942 by the Polish Government in exile as a continuation of the Union of Armed Struggle (*Związek Walki Zbrojnej*), established by the Government in November 1939.

¹⁵ The People's Army (*Armia Ludowa*) — underground military organization of the Polish Left, established on 1 January 1944, on the basis of the People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*) active since January 1942.

Voivodship of Lublin and, subsequently, the eastern part of Kielce Voivodship), and concentrated there sizable partisan forces which attacked mainly the enemy's communication and transportation. The same motive (the immediate vicinity of the front) accounted also for the intensification of the German anti-partisan operations in the Voivodship of Lublin.

All that has been said so far, seems to justify the view that an analysis of specific regional characteristics of the resistance movement should be preceded by an analysis of the broadly conceived conditioning factors. I believe that the intensity of at least some forms of underground activities can be investigated in a similar way (e.g. underground education was mainly concentrated in the Districts of Warsaw and Cracow — two university centres with a large number of prewar secondary-school teachers and persons actually engaged in educational work who organized the network of the underground education). One should, however, keep in mind all the complexity of the conditioning factors and the combination of advantageous and disadvantageous conditions.

In this connection, it seems useful to recall here certain general features of the anti-Nazi underground in Poland, whose activities were the main content and the main form of manifestation of the Polish resistance movement.¹⁶

Without going into details, I would like to emphasize two of those features: the dynamism and the atomization of the Polish underground. Poland's defensive war in 1939 had not yet come to an end when the first underground groups began to arise, and the first underground publications (news-sheets, leaflets) appeared as early as the beginning of October 1939. At the turn of 1939 and 1940, more than 100 underground independist organizations were formed in Poland and the underground press at that time counted as many titles. It is generally estimated that in the years 1939 - 1944, over 300 military, political, social and other organizations manifested their presence in underground work; their publications within the same period included well over 1,200 different titles of underground press, and more than 1,000 pamphlets and books (not counting leaflets). The size and the influence of these organizations varied greatly. Most of them were relatively short-lived: some fell victims of Nazi police reprisals (especially in the incorporated territories), others united with akin organizations or subordinated themselves to those organizations which had a mandate of the Polish Government in exile. In spite of that, the mosaic-like character of organizational structures, ideas, views — or, to put it briefly, the atomization — remained the

¹⁶ I deal with these matters more extensively in my article *La structure sociale et politique de la résistance anti-hitlerienne en Pologne, 1939 - 1944* ("Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale", 1970, No. 78).

distinctive feature of the anti-Nazi underground (in Polish historical literature, the term "Underground Poland" is also used) in the first two-three years of occupation. It is true that at the same time centripetal tendencies arose but in Poland of 1943 - 1944, they assumed the form of polarized concentrations grouping different social and political forces opposite each other. The degree of polarization can be seen for example from the fact that in the Polish underground there never arose such political institutions like the French *Conseil National de la Résistance*, the Italian *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* or the Danish *Frihetsraad* (which all rallied different political currents; from Christian Democrats to Communists), or such unified formations as the *Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur*. Thus, when discussing the regional differences, one must not for a moment forget the above-mentioned atomization which was not overcome until the end of occupation and, above all, the ideological and political polarization of Underground Poland. And while that polarization, if we examine it on the regional scale, appeared with different intensity and even in different forms, yet it manifested itself distinctly throughout the whole territory under discussion. We shall yet return to this problem.

The beginning of the occupation, in spite of the shock caused by the war defeat, the atmosphere of gloom and even certain symptoms of crisis, did not, however, give rise to manifestations of conformism on a mass scale, or of adjustment to the new situation, let alone of accepting it. The independist attitude of the Polish people gathered strength from their conviction (which prevailed at least until the defeat of France) about the prompt victory of the adversaries of the 3rd Reich, from the establishment and activity of the Polish Government in exile (in which the public opinion saw a symbol of the continuity of Poland's statehood), and from the speedy growth of the anti-Nazi underground. In this respect, the feelings and the attitudes of the overwhelming majority of the Polish people at the turn of 1939 and 1940 were greatly different from the analogical attitudes for example of the French population after the defeat of June 1940, even if we take into consideration all the specific elements of the French people's attitude towards Marshal Pétain.

The anti-occupation and independist aspirations became manifest after September 1939 with various intensity and in various forms. One can, however, get a certain idea on the state of minds from the spontaneous rising of smaller and larger underground groups and from the incommensurable but very wide approval for underground struggle, common to all social and political circles.

It has already been remarked by one of the Polish historians that the prewar Western territories, after their incorporation to the Reich,

“were the front line of the national liberation struggle.” The author of the above-quoted statement had in mind both the implementation by the 3rd Reich of her designs with regard to the annexed territories, and the various kinds of Polish counter-action. I propose to point to a few problems only. In the years 1939 - 1945 till the liberation, underground activities were carried on by a total of about 80 bigger and smaller, nation-wide and local, military, political and social organizations in the incorporated territories in various periods of time. Numerically, a balance existed in principle between Silesia, Pomerania and Great-Poland, at least in the initial period of the occupation. The greatest number of underground organizations and groups were formed in the first six months of the occupation. In view of the conditions prevailing in the incorporated territories, the first stage of the anti-Nazi underground movement in those provinces can certainly be characterized as a period of very animated but spontaneous formation of various underground groups. An end was put to that culmination by mass arrests: in Silesia — towards the end of 1940, in the city and region of Poznań — at the turn of 1940 and during 1941, in Łódź — already at the turn of 1939 and during 1940, in Pomerania — in 1940 and 1941. In Silesia and Great-Poland, the arrests struck at the biggest underground military and political organizations, liquidated their directing organs and even their organizational networks. If we add to that the already mentioned mass expulsions and displacements and other manifestations of anti-Polish action by the German authorities, the crisis of the Polish underground in the annexed territories will become an obvious conclusion. What is more, that crisis coincided in time with the greatest military successes of the 3rd Reich, which added to the depression of the Polish population in Silesia, Pomerania and Great-Poland.

The present state of research does not yet make it possible to present even a fragmentary characterization of the various phases and mechanisms of the development of anti-Nazi underground movement in the incorporated territories. At any rate, after the mass arrests of 1940 - 1941, subsisting in the underground were above all framework structures of the nation-wide organizations which, after all, after 1941 absorbed a considerable part of the local organizations and, here and there, the remnants of the routed ones. Such was the case in Great-Poland and Silesia. In Pomerania, on the other hand, the biggest local military and political organization (The Pomeranian Griffin Clandestine Military Organization) remained autonomous until liberation.

It was in Great-Poland that the underground movement seems to have been the most dynamic organizationally. After each major wave

of arrests, the local underground leaders almost immediately began to work at reconstructing the organizational networks. It is true that those efforts were not always successful and the underground movement in Great-Poland experienced more than one crisis, yet the thesis of the complete disappearance of the Polish resistance movement, advanced in some earlier works by West-German historians, will not hold water.

Among the nation-wide military organizations active in Silesia and in the Dąbrowa Basin, the greatest cadre potential was represented by the Union of Armed Struggle — ZWZ (later: the Home Army) and by the military organization of the Polish Socialist Party — PPS (that Party used during the war the name WRN — the Polish initials for: Freedom, Equality, Independence).¹⁷ In the years 1943-1944, on the other hand, an ever greater role was played by the military organization of the Polish Workers' Party¹⁸ (the People's Guard, later the People's Army). Active beside these three formations, were less numerous forces of the National Military Organization — NOW (set up by the National Party¹⁹ — a rightist nationalist party), the Peasant Battalions (the military organization of the Peasant Party)²⁰ and a few more minor underground organizations.

The main form of action of the military underground in Silesia and in the Dąbrowa Basin, throughout the whole period of occupation, was economic sabotage — which was connected with the industrial character of a great part of that region. Partisan war (naturally on a much smaller scale than in any part of the GG) developed only in the southern, wooded and mountainous, part of the province.

Among the political organizations, the relatively greatest influence was exerted by the Polish Socialist Party — Freedom, Equality,

¹⁷ Freedom — Equality — Independence (*Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość*) was not a continuation of the entire prewar Polish Socialist Party (established in 1892). In the years of the war, in the underground Socialist movement emerged a left wing which, at the turn of 1943 pronounced for cooperation with the Polish Workers' Party.

¹⁸ The Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*) was established in January 1942 on the basis of Communist and anti-fascist groups active since the beginning of the occupation (the Polish Communist Party had been dissolved in 1938 by a decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International).

¹⁹ The Party was established in 1928 as a continuation of the political groupings of the nationalistic bourgeoisie and of the Polish big land-owners, the beginnings of which dated back to the end of the 19th century. The party established its own underground organization at the turn of 1939.

²⁰ The Peasant Party (*Stronnictwo Ludowe*) was formed in 1931 from the merger of three peasant parties whose origins dated back to the turn of the 19th century. The Peasant Party established its own underground organization in 1940.

Independence, a much lesser influence by the Labour Party²¹ (representing Christian-Democratic tendencies). Growing swiftly in the last years of the war was the influence of the Polish Workers' Party which, on the eve of liberation, represented already a major political force. In the first period of the occupation, a considerable role in the underground was played by the National Party and its National Military Organization. Yet the arrests of 1940 - 1941 greatly impaired both organizations.

However, ascertaining political influences or indicating the main form of underground struggle, does not yet reveal the specific character of the situation in Silesia (without the Dąbrowa Basin, this time). According to one of the historians,²² the situation of the population of that province of Poland, provided an opportunity not to be found elsewhere (with the exception of Pomerania, maybe) for a kind of public manifestation of their attitude towards the 3rd Reich. We have in mind the problem of using the Polish language. The first years of war and occupation (Hitler's military successes, the terror, expulsions, the German Nationality List, etc.), forced the Polish language out of public places in Silesia. But it took no more than the first defeats of the Reich (Stalingrad and then the capitulation of Italy) for the Polish language to return to the streets and squares of the villages, towns and even cities of Silesia. According to the author of one of the police reports from 1943 (covering the entire area of Upper Silesia), the mass-scale and public use of Polish was the evidence of an "ostentatious and provocative" way of expressing the attitude towards the Reich. If we consider that the overwhelming majority of the Polish population of Silesia had a good command of German and, by reason of being included in the German nationality group, were obliged to use that language, we must admit that the police reports were right. In the years 1943 - 1944, the attitude of the Silesian people found expression in the ever more general and public use of Polish.

In Great-Poland, subjected to particularly strict control by the German authorities, the underground organizations strove to work in such a way as to counteract to the best of their abilities the German policy and to preserve the spiritual substance of the nation. According to the students of that region,²³ however, a particularly important role was played by individual passive resistance, harder to detect (e.g. economic sabotage in towns and in the countryside).

Among the military organizations, the strongest cadre potential in the early phase of the occupation was concentrated in the ranks of the

²¹ The Labour Party (*Stronnictwo Pracy*) was formed in 1937 from the merger of two minor groupings active previously.

²² K. Popiołek, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²³ E. Serwański, *op. cit.*, pp. 395 ff.

Union of Armed Struggle and the National Military Organization. After mass arrests that affected the latter, and the unification action carried out by the Union of Armed Struggle — the Home Army, and as a result of the developing military and political underground movement of the peasants, the years 1942 - 1944 saw a concentration of the main forces in the Home Army and in the Peasant Battalions. In the political underground, the greatest role was played by the National Party (in spite of the arrests of 1940 - 1941) and by the Peasant Party; among the local organizations, the most important was *Ojczyzna* (The Motherland). It is worth noting in this connection that predominating in the attitudes of the Polish people of Great-Poland was the sense of legalism in relation to the Polish Government in exile; it also extended onto the organs of that Government in occupied Poland or in Great-Poland (The Office of the Government Delegate²⁴ and the Home Army).

It has already been mentioned that the territory of the so-called *Warthegau* included, beside Great-Poland, also a part of the prewar Voivodship of Łódź; that area was comprised in the organizational districts of the Home Army, the Peasant Battalions, the Polish Workers' Party and its military organizations. The Peasant Battalions and the Home Army established extensive organizational networks there, numerically outstanding in the whole area of the incorporated territories. The same can be said of the Polish Workers' Party, the People's Guard and the People's Army.

In Pomerania, in spite of the extremely difficult conditions, the resistance movement deployed all the forms of struggle used in Poland (we leave aside, of course, the scale of actual achievements); these forms included diversion and fighting operations (according to incomplete data, a total of 200 actions, including 60 assaults on police posts, minor military detachments and objects, 75 armed encounters and defensive fights, 26 overt acts of sabotage).²⁵ The intensity of the resistance movement in Pomerania, in the immediate vicinity of the "old 3rd Reich", aroused the particular interest of Himmler who personally instructed the police

²⁴ The Office of the Government Delegate in the Occupied Country — the underground representation of the Polish Government in exile, active since the middle of 1940. The Office was headed by the Government Delegate (from 1942 with the rank of Minister, from 1944 — of Vice-Premier of the Polish Government in London). The seat of the Office was in Warsaw, and its activities covered the territory of Poland within her frontiers of before 1 September, 1939. The Office organized an underground network of State administration on the voivodship and county level.

²⁵ K. Ciechanowski, *Ruch oporu na Pomorzu Gdańskim* [The Resistance Movement in Gdańsk Pomerania] — now printing.

authorities in the methods of combatting the Polish resistance movement (a unique case as far as the incorporated territories were concerned). All the same, I find it necessary to emphasize once again that the efforts of the resistance movement in Pomerania must not be measured by comparisons to the GG, but by the actual conditions in which those efforts were undertaken (e.g., the fighting and partisan groups had their bases literally under ground, in camouflaged shelters and bunkers). The least known are the achievements in the field of intelligence work. They must have been considerable, however, if the British Admiralty in a letter to the Chief of Staff of the Polish Armed Forces in the West in January 1943 stressed, among other things, the importance of the valuable information obtained from Gdynia, the Polish port on the Baltic (situated in Pomerania). The underground network in Pomerania also supplied valuable information to the Soviet intelligence organs.

In the military underground, after the mass arrests and the unification action, the greatest cadre potential in the years 1943 - 1944 was concentrated in the Home Army and in the Pomeranian Griffin Clan-destine Military Organization (an extensive local organization of military an political character whose origins dated back to 1940). Among political organizations, the strongest was the influence of the National Party and (less strong) that of the Labour Party. After the mass arrests, the organizational networks of the parties shrank considerably but the influence of the Right (the National Party) persisted (the Pomeranian Griffin differed only slightly from the National Party in its ideology). Finally, the Polish Workers' Party deployed underground activity in a number of localities in Pomerania.

Nearly all the nation-wide organizations established their networks and carried on activities in the annexed territories although their respective influence varied from one region to another. There had also arisen local organizations, some of which survived through the whole period of occupation and marked their presence quite distinctly in various underground actions (the Pomeranian Griffin in Pomerania, the "Motherland" in Great-Poland.)

To conclude this brief characterization of the resistance movement in the incorporated territories, I wish to make two more remarks:

Firstly: the anti-Nazi underground movement in those parts of Poland (like in the GG, after all) was ideologically and politically differentiated; in the areas where the Polish Workers' Party was active, those differences led to polarization. Yet, unlike in the GG, the differences existing in the annexed territories never and nowhere assumed extreme forms (of fratricidal fighting). Neither did the anti-Soviet attitude of the leading

centres of the underground connected with the Polish Government in exile, result in the acceptance of the theory of two enemies of Poland: Germany and Russia. On the contrary, prevailing in the public consciousness which was shaped by long historical experience (most of those territories had remained under Prussian rule from the end of the 18th century until 1918), was the conviction that there was one enemy — the Germans, and two allies — the English and the Russians. This problem was signalled repeatedly in the reports of various units of the underground connected with the Government in exile. Here are two typical excerpts from reports from Silesia: “What the Polish people desire above all is peace with Russia, so that Poland may devote all her forces to the territories we shall regain in the West” (July 1943); “The people at large sympathize with Russia [...] because they consider that the Germans are the main enemy, and whoever beats the Germans effectively, wins the sympathy of those who have suffered so much” (June 1944). Similar reports reached Warsaw from Pomerania and Great-Poland.²⁶ This is all the more significant since, as I have already mentioned, the decisive influence in the best part of the incorporated territories belonged to rightist political currents.

Secondly: the Polish people in the annexed territories, beside daily worries and the struggle for survival, were particularly concerned with the problems of future Polish-German relations and of safeguards for the security of Poland’s western frontier. As for the frontier itself, it was universally believed that it would run along the Odra. A report from Silesia (March 1943) stated: “The Silesians are certain that Poland will obtain the Odra line.” Similar information is contained in a report from Great-Poland (November 1943): “The political interest of the general public turns towards the future western frontier which people would like to see on the Odra.” Both these reports were submitted by cells of the underground connected with the Government in exile.²⁷ I believe that this concurrence of views with regard to the problems of territorial revindications in the West, contributed very effectively to take the edge off the conflicts among the various factions of the anti-Nazi underground movement in the incorporated territories.

Finally, a few words about the *Generalgouvernement* — chiefly about the strength of the underground movement and about certain efforts of the resistance movement which can be put in terms of figures.

²⁶ M. Orzechowski, *Odra — Nysa Łużycka — Bałtyk w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu II wojny światowej* [*The Odra — the Lusatian Nysa — the Baltic Sea in the Polish Political Thought of the Period of the Second World War*], Wrocław, 1969, p. 86.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 90.

In the first months of the occupation, dozens of underground groups were formed in all social and professional milieus. In the subsequent years, the unification processes, the reprisals by German police authorities, etc., resulted in a considerable reduction of the number of organizations but the total potential of the underground was constantly growing, especially after 1941 (in spite of setbacks and breakdowns occurring here and there, mainly as a consequence of arrests), to reach its climax in the spring and summer of 1944. Among underground political organizations, the greatest role was played (in order of numerical strength and influence exerted) by the Peasant Party, the National Party, the Polish Socialist Party — Freedom, Equality, Independence. A considerable role was played by the socialist left. The faction called Workers' Party of Polish Socialists declared for a close cooperation with the Polish Workers' Party and a part of the People's Militia (the armed organization of the Workers' Party of Polish Socialists) joined the People's Army.

Revolutionary Left was represented above all by the Polish Workers' Party (formed in January 1942) which reached the peak of its growth and influence in the years 1943 - 1944, especially in that latter year. The military underground included above all (in chronological order) the Home Army, the National Military Organization, the Peasant Battalions, the People's Guard — later the People's Army. The most numerous among them was unquestionably the Home Army (in the middle of 1944, after the incorporation into it of a considerable part of the Peasant Battalions, it numbered about 300 thousand sworn members); it was active in the entire prewar territory of Poland, and its main forces (in order of strength) were in the Voivodships of Cracow, Warsaw, Lublin and Kielce. The second biggest military organization, the Peasant Battalions (with organizational networks in the entire prewar territory of Poland) had the main bulk of its forces (in order of strength) in the Voivodships of Lublin, Kielce, Cracow and Warsaw. The leftist military organization (the People's Guard and, subsequently, the People's Army) was the last to emerge in the underground but its partisan units were the first to engage in armed struggle (in May 1942) thus opposing the wait-and-see attitude of the Home Army. In the years 1942 - 1944, the People's Guard and the People's Army put in the field over 200 units (at first groups and detachments, in 1944 — partisan brigades, the latter counting from 150 to 2,000 men).

We do not have at our disposal adequate figures to present the distribution of the forces of military organizations in the various regions. However, on the basis of fragmentary research we already know today that in the middle of 1944, the three main armed organizations (the Home

Army, the People's Army, the Peasant Battalions) rallied in their ranks over 60 thousand sworn members in the Voivodship of Kielce and about 32 thousand in the Voivodship of Warsaw (complete data are missing for the Voivodships of Lublin and Cracow; it can be assumed, however, that the strength of the abovenamed three organizations exceeded there the combined strength reached in the Voivodships of Kielce and Warsaw). In the same period, the strength of partisan field units in the Voivodship of Kielce reached 5,100 men in the Home Army, 1,800 men in the People's Army, 1,100 in the Peasant Battalions. That meant that the People's Army partisan units accounted for about 30 per cent of the total strength, the Home Army units — for 17 per cent, and the Peasant Battalions for 4 per cent, respectively.²⁸ It can be hypothetically assumed that similar proportions (the ratio of men in partisan units to the total number of sworn members) existed — with minor variations — in the Voivodships of Lublin and Warsaw. In the Voivodship of Cracow, the picture was probably different because, as I have already mentioned, due to various circumstances, that voivodship was not one of the regions with particularly intensive armed resistance movement; on the other hand, everything seems to indicate that the sworn membership of armed organizations was not lower there than in the Voivodship of Kielce, and may even have been higher, while in the Voivodship of Lublin the respective absolute figures were considerably higher.

Even greater difficulties arise when one attempts to take stock (in numerical terms) of the effort of the Polish resistance movement in combatting the occupation system and the German military potential in the GG. To illustrate the problem, I shall use greatly incomplete German sources, namely the daily, decade, and monthly reports on the actions of the armed resistance movement in the GG and on the fight against it, prepared by the Command of the Military District in that area. These documents fail, however, to give a full picture, for at least two reasons. Firstly, they cover the period from July 1942 to the end of July 1944; secondly, they do not comprise the attacks against the police, the administration, the farm-product quotas collected by the Germans, against the deportations for forced labour in the Reich.

According to the above-cited sources,²⁹ in the period from July 1942 to July 1944, armed detachments and diversion groups of all underground organizations, the Soviet partisan forces active in the GG, and the spontaneous resistance movement, were responsible for a total of 110,238 actions of different kinds, aimed against the occupants. Out of those,

²⁸ B. Hillebrandt, *op. cit.*

²⁹ See: "Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny," 1966, No. 4, pp. 72 - 118.

5,018 actions were performed by major partisan units. This makes an average of 4,410 actions per month or 147 per day. These figures cannot be classified more precisely because only 34,174 actions, or 31 per cent of the total, are described in greater detail. It is known however that 7,996 actions took place in the period July - December 1942, 53,501 from January till December 1943, 48,741 from January till July 1944.

Out of the total of 34,174 actions described in greater detail, 9,671 were directed against the apparatus of terror, oppression and administration; 3,127 — against the transportation and communications system; 9,805 — against the economy; 11,481 other actions were aimed mainly against collaborationists.

If one attempted, on the basis of these and other sources, to draw a map of the armed efforts of the resistance movement in the GG, the picture would probably look as follows: a particular intensity of the struggle would distinguish the Voivodship of Lublin, the eastern part of the Warsaw Voivodship, almost the entire territory of the Kielce Voivodship, the eastern fragments of the Łódź Voivodship, and a few centres in the Voivodship of Cracow (mainly in its southern part). I would like to emphasize, however, that those were areas of particularly intensive fighting. The leading place of the Voivodship of Lublin seems unquestionable: concentrated in that area were very considerable forces of the Polish guerilla, and operating in the immediate vicinity were major Soviet partisan concentrations (which often ventured into the territory of the Lublin Voivodship); those gave support to the Polish resistance movement if only by their presence in the close neighbourhood, not to mention their big raids through the area of the voivodship. The Kielce Voivodship had its place immediately after that of Lublin. On the map of efforts of the Polish resistance movement, there was one more point of special significance — Warsaw. This was so not only because in Warsaw in the spring of 1943, the Jewish fighters in the ghetto took up arms and the summer of 1944 saw there Europe's longest-lasting uprising in a big city when the Polish population was fighting during 63 days. Warsaw was the seat of all nation-wide underground organizations, the centre of activities of many other, minor, underground groups. It was in Warsaw that the overwhelming part of underground publications (news — sheets, newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets) were printed, and the degree of participation of the inhabitants in various underground activities was the highest in the whole country. It was in the capital that underground secondary and university education was concentrated. Finally, Warsaw was an area of extremely intensive sabotage and armed action (it is estimated that up to the outbreak of the uprising, various

fighting groups of the Polish underground fought about 700 scuffles and armed encounters there).

Warsaw radiated over the entire country like probably no other capital city of occupied Europe (according to Governor-General Hans Frank, it was from Warsaw that "the whole evil" was coming), it imparted dynamism to the resistance movement not only in the adjacent regions. Warsaw assumed the role of the collective symbol, cumulating the patriotic emotions of the whole nation, already in September 1939; and persisted as such until the uprising of 1944. One of the diarists from outside Warsaw recollects that one would come to the capital not only to get the latest news but above all to purge oneself from the everyday commonplaceness of life under occupation, in spite of the fact that one encountered those realities of the occupation at every step in Warsaw.

The capital city was not only throbbing with the underground struggle for independence. It was there that the different ideas and views crossed most vividly and most audibly, although it seems that the Voivodship of Kielce was the scene of their most violent confrontations (fratricidal fights).

One of the most interesting features of the social life in the GG under occupation consisted in the rapid and strong growth of trends to social radicalism. In the years 1943 - 1944, those tendencies spread not only over large sections of the working-class and peasantry but also over certain groups of the intelligentsia. That process found reflection also in the relatively numerous splits and shifts in the underground organizations and in the growing influence of the Polish Workers' Party.

In concluding, it seems necessary to repeat that this paper only points to a few problems, often detached from one another. This random treatment of the subject is caused by the present state of research that imposes limits on any attempt at a more synthetical approach.

(Translated by Antoni Szymanowski)