

Book reviews/Discussions

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Waldemar Sęczyk, *Struktura i zadania propagandy komunistycznej w Polsce w latach 80. XX w. Wstęp do zagadnienia*, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2019, pp. 485.

Each authority strives to obtain obedience and legitimacy, only the means of obtaining them are different. In totalitarian regimes, violence and manipulation are often used. Manipulation can take various forms, including propaganda activity. As the researchers indicate, it aims primarily at creating a positive image of specific individuals, parties or political institutions (Kącka, 2019, p. 362). It also fulfilled this function in the difficult period for Poland before 1989. Despite the passage of years, this subject is extremely vital to this day, and for this reason the publication *Struktura i zadania propagandy komunistycznej w Polsce w latach 80. XX w. Wstęp do zagadnienia* written by Waldemar Sęczyk deserve attention.

The publication consists of an introduction, five substantive chapters, an ending, and an index of abbreviations used throughout the book. The first theoretical chapter presents the evolution of the concept of propaganda during the interwar period, and describes the principles and structure of the propaganda apparatus in Poland. According to the author, their origins should be sought in the eastern territories of the Commonwealth as early as in the 1940s (p. 43), and not as it might seem during the communist rule. In the second chapter, the author presents how Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP, pl. *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*) had to be reorganized, both in terms of structures, used forms of propaganda and methods of work. The author assumes that the introduction of martial law was aimed at combating the opposition (p. 127), and thus at the same time it targeted communist ideology. Directions for modifying the structures of the propaganda apparatus and proposals for changes were to be determined by the Ideological Commission established in 1981 at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the PUWP (p. 107) and National Theoretical and Ideological Conferences (pl. *Ogólnopolskie konferencje teoretyczno-ideologiczne*) (p. 173). In chapter three, the author addresses the condition of the PUWP in the face of quite controversial decisions taken during its 10th plenary session. The author describes in it the size of the party, and on the basis of, among others, reports from surveys (p. 208) or analyzes of in-party consultation theses (pl. *analizy wewnętrzpartyjnych konsultacji tez*) (p. 209), as well as the attitude and moods of its members toward the announced changes. On the example of provincial Voivodship PUWP (pl. KW PZPR) in Wałbrzych it shows how the changes looked at the local level. The fourth chapter is largely the historical background of the "round table" period and the June elections, but also a description of PUWP's intentions and expectations regarding propaganda activities. In addition, the author familiarizes the reader with the twists and turns of the political campaign at that time. The last chapter is an attempt to find out the reasons for the failure of the grouping in the election, its attitude to this, but most of all the evaluation of the campaign made by province structures and by an external institution. As the author indicates, the electoral disaster caused rapid destruction of the party and transformation (p. 419).

Unfortunately, the publication is not without its weaknesses. First, the author states that the analysis of party materials will allow to understand the thinking, state of awareness and expectations of party members and authorities (p. 25). This seems not entirely possible, because the documents may give some picture of the aspirations, but they will never let fully know the true aspirations. What raises doubts is also an attempt to examine the state of awareness, which can be difficult even for psychologists and would require the development of an adequate research tool.

The publication also contains quite a lot of subjective assessments and opinions, which, however, ultimately does not affect the positive reception of the book and its substantive and informative value. Strengths of the reviewed publication are substantive related chapters, reliable analyzes and sources used in the study. In addition, the author presents in an interesting way propaganda activity in this difficult period for Poland.

The publication is a good proposition for both journalism and political science scholars who should be aware of the mechanisms and events that are undoubtedly relevant to today's shape of the political scene and system. It is also a noteworthy position for everyone dealing with manipulation mechanisms and propaganda activity, because although there are more tools and possibilities nowadays, some schemes are reproduced at every latitude and have the same purpose.

Bibliography

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