

# Political Radicalism as a Threat to the Reborn Republic of Poland

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**Abstract.** *Political radicalism as a threat to the reborn Republic of Poland. The interwar period in Poland was characterised by the occurrence of real threats to the internal security of the state, the source of which was radicalism and political extremism. It was both left-wing and right-wing radicalism. We should mention here communism supported by Bolshevik Russia, Ukrainian nationalism supported by unfavourable countries such as Germany or Czechoslovakia, and Polish right-wing radicals who sought to change the political system of the country but not to annihilate it. All these political trends may have contributed to the destabilization of the Second Republic, but reborn Poland managed to create an appropriate internal security system, which included the Political Police, and on the other hand, the Polish society, as the history of the Second Republic shows, was not seduced by the political extremes.*

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## Introduction

In reborn Poland, there were already political trends which had their roots in the 19th century, i.e. in the years of Partitions, as well as new ones which constituted the original intellectual achievements of free Poland. In addition to moderate ideologies, there were also radical left-wing and right-wing factions. Representatives of national minorities, who also preached radical slogans, even propagating political extremism and related violence were also present on the Polish territory. Among the radical left-wing groups, one should point out communist programmes and organisations, both Polish (Communist Party of Workers' Poland — KPRP, Communist Party of Poland — KPP) and those which gathered representatives of other nationalities (Common Jewish Workers' Union in Lithuania, BUND in Poland and Russia, Communist Party of Western Ukraine — KPZU, Communist Party of Western Belarus — KPZB) but there were also representatives of the extreme right-wing and supporters of the increasingly popular totalitarian movement in Europe (National-Radical Camp, ONR Falanga, ONR ABC). It should also be mentioned about radical national activists among the Ukrainian or German minorities on the Polish territory of the Second Republic.

## Main Part

The Polish state was an obstacle to the implementation of communist slogans to establish a global communist system. It was also an obstacle to the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. Thus, it was the goal of both organized extreme left-wing and Ukrainian nationalists. Moreover, it is worth remembering the Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-German antagonism (Poland as a seasonal state). For Soviet Russia (since 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) it was also a 'bastard of Versailles'. It should, therefore, be liquidated in whole or in part. Hence, radical and extremist groups could expect support from neighbouring countries hostile to Poland. A separate problem was the position of the extreme Polish right-wing towards the state in which it was to function. For it, the aim was not to destroy the state but its democratic system. The Polish state and its security apparatus had to control all radical trends threatening its existence. That is why there was a special role for both counterintelligence and military intelligence as well as civil counterintelligence known as the Political Police. On the one hand, there were demands for the liquidation of the Polish state and on the other hand for its radical transformation. In both cases, state institutions had to take appropriate measures to eliminate threats from radicals and extremists operating on the territory of the Polish state.

The greatest threat to the internal security of the country in the first years after its rebirth was the activity of extreme left-wing groups. The danger from this side was all the more dangerous because Polish communists (Ukrainian and Belarusian) could count on the support of not only the whole communist movement but also the Soviet state itself, for which capitalist Poland was an obstacle on the way to establish a communist system in Europe and all over the world. Therefore, the creation of Poland did not meet with the favour of the organization of the extreme left abroad and at home. It could be expected that organizations loyal to global communism could undertake not only propaganda but also sabotage and spying activities for the benefit of the neighbouring communist state.<sup>1</sup>

On December 16, 1918, as a result of the union of two parties: the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) and the Polish Socialist Party-Left (PPS-Left), the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP, since 1925 as the Communist Party of Poland, KPP) was created, whose aim was to create a communist system in Poland within the framework of global communism, which in practice meant the liquidation of Polish statehood. It should be stressed that from 1919, after the creation of the Communist International (Komintern), this party became part of it. At the same time, the KPRP was closely connected with the Soviet power in Russia. It aimed to join Poland to the state in which the proletariat dictatorship was to reign, i.e. to Soviet Russia. At the time of its creation, the KPRP in its program, mentioning the events in Russia and Germany, directly called for fighting against reborn Poland: 'If we don't want us to be handcuffed, we have to start our revolution in Poland, to destroy the rule of the bourgeoisie, to gain power for the Workers' Delegates' Councils'. (*Program Manifesto*). Poland became an independent,

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<sup>1</sup> Miodowski A, Dywersja polityczna KPRP przeciwko wojsku polskiemu na przełomie lat 1918/1919. *Studia Podlaskie*, 2015, Vol. XXIII.

democratic republic based on the principles of capitalism, therefore, according to the doctrine of communism, it had to be considered an enemy.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the KPRP, subordinated its interests to the Soviet state, seeking to weaken or overthrow Polish statehood. Such actions were taken primarily during the Polish-Soviet War.

In 1932, at the 6th KPP congress, a negative stance towards Poland's independence and integrity was once again taken, stating 'KPP fights for the right of every nation subjugated by Polish imperialism to total self-determination until it breaks away from the Polish state [...]. KPP mobilises the masses working in Upper Silesia, as well as in Pomerania [Gdańsk], to fight against the national oppression of the German population under the slogan of the right to self-determination until they break away from Poland [...]. Concerning Upper Silesia and the Pomeranian Corridor, the Polish proletariat will cross out the rulings of imperialist treaties and provide the population of these lands with the right to self-determination until they are separated from Poland. Concerning Gdańsk, the KPP fights the yoke of Poland and the League of Nations imposed on it, fights the annexationist policy of Polish imperialism and recognises the right of the Gdańsk population, separated from Germany by force, to reunite with Germany'.<sup>3</sup>

A big problem for the communists in Poland was to find an answer to the question regarding direct military actions, including individual terrorism. In the middle of the 1920s, a discussion was held in KPP on the creation of battle groups of this party. Separate standpoints appeared that such groups were to be used for terrorist attacks, to have only a protective character for rallies and demonstrations organised by this party or as a cadre to be launched in case of a revolution<sup>4</sup>. Despite differences of opinion on the purposefulness of individual terrorism, on 28 April 1924 in Łódź, a communist Samuel Engel murdered a police agent, and in July an attempt to blow up an ammunition depot in Lwów was thwarted.<sup>5</sup>

Activities aimed at destabilising the Polish state were carried out by a separate structure within the framework of the KPRP (KPP) — the Military Department of the KPRP, commonly referred to as 'the military'. The activities of this structure consisted of the use of terrorist methods, not to intimidate but first and foremost to harm the state institutions.

The Department was supplied with weapons from the USSR, as it cooperated with the services of this country.<sup>6</sup> Particular military activity of the KPRP (KPP) was noted in the eastern parts of Poland, where the communists tried to bring about conflicts between ethnic and national groups to destabilize the country. Numerous murders of Polish functionaries and officials, officers of the Polish Army and Border Protection Corps, policemen as well as landowners were carried out in this area.

<sup>2</sup> Trembicka K, Środowisko komunistów wobec odzyskania niepodległości przez Polskę i wojny polsko-bolszewickiej, [in:] Kowalczyk E (Ed.), *Komuniści w międzywojennej Warszawie*. Warsaw, 2014, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Electronic source*: ipn.gov.pl, accessed: 12.09.2019.

<sup>4</sup> Trembicka K, *Między utopią a rzeczywistością. Myśl polityczna Komunistycznej Partii Polski (1918–1938)*. Lublin, 2007, p. 165–166.

<sup>5</sup> *Electronic source*: ipn.gov.pl, accessed: 14.09.2019.

<sup>6</sup> Poboży B, *Nurt komunistyczny*, [in:] Przybysz K (Ed.), *Polskie partie i ruchy społeczno-polityczne pierwszej połowy XX wieku*. Warsaw, 2010, p. 228.

The most important attack carried out by KPP was the blowing up of a part of the Warsaw Citadel on 13 October 1923.<sup>7</sup> The assassins aimed to blow up the entire ammunition depot in the Citadel, but this intention did not succeed. 28 people died in the attack — soldiers and civilians and 90 people were wounded.<sup>8</sup> Two officers linked to KPP (Walery Bagiński and Antoni Wiczorkiewicz) were charged in connection with the attack. These officers prepared the attack although they did not participate in it because they were already detained at that time and the main evidence of their guilt was the fact that immediately after the explosion they sang a revolutionary song. The perpetrators of the attack were sentenced to death, and the main witness of the prosecution, cooperating with the defence, died on July 28, 1925, in the assassination in Lwów killed by Isaac Naftali Botwin, who was soon detained, sentenced and shot for this assassination.<sup>9</sup> The police agent, Józef Cechnowski — the main witness of the prosecution, — was already recruited by the police Lieutenant Colonel Piątkiewicz at that time. The first assassination attempt on Cechnowski did not take place. During these actions, an exchange of fire took place, which resulted in the deaths of bystanders. The perpetrators of the assassination (Hibner, Kniewski and Rutkowski) were arrested and sentenced to death, and the sentence was executed. On the other hand, Naftali Botwin was previously an activist of Cukunft organization. It is worth mentioning that in the end, two officers were to be exchanged for the former honorary consul of Poland in Georgia, his wife and daughters and the priest Bronisław Ussas, who were detained in the USSR, but the exchange did not take place, because just before the officers were murdered by a police officer Józef Muraszka.<sup>10</sup>

For tactical reasons, caused by the loss (arrest, trial and execution) of the most committed participants of the armed groups, at the end of 1925, these groups were dissolved<sup>11</sup>. In connection with the adoption of the tactics of preparations for a wider armed uprising, in the 1930s the battle groups were re-established to lead the fighting in the future. Meanwhile, training was conducted, and the groups were to deal with the reconnaissance of the state security system, including critical infrastructure, as well as the preparation of a register of people who were the target of the attack and detention.<sup>12</sup>

Already in the time when the principles of the Second Republic of Poland were being created, strong communist agitation was visible, especially in the southern borderlands of the country. Increased penetration activities were noticed in the Volhynia Province, where communist agitators first and foremost tried to reach the soldiers, receiving help from the communists of the Soviet part of Ukraine.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Żuławnik M, *Eksplozja w cytadeli 13 października 1923 roku. Przyczynek do działalności komunistów w garnizonie Warszawa*, [in:] Kowalczyk E (Ed.), *Komuniści w międzywojennej Warszawie*. Warsaw, 2014, pp. 151–174.

<sup>8</sup> *Electronic source: www.kresy24.pl/17657/zagadkowa-smierc-szpiegow-pod-stolpcami*, accessed: 12.09.2019.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; Trembicka K, *Między utopią ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>10</sup> *Electronic source: www.kresy24.pl...*, *op. cit.*, accessed: 21.09.2019.

<sup>11</sup> Trembicka K, *Między utopią ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 168.

<sup>13</sup> Hładyszuk S, *Agitacja bolszewicka i ruch komunistyczny na Wołyniu w okresie formowania polskiej administracji (1919–1921)*. *Komunizm: System-Ludzie-Dokumentacja. Rocznik naukowy*, 2015, No. 4, p. 14.

Similarly to the communists from Volhynia seeking to join Soviet Ukraine at the expense of Poland, the Communist Party of Western Belarus (KPZB) wanted to separate Vilnius from Poland<sup>14</sup>. This party was established by a decision of the KPRP made in August 1923 and operated in the north-eastern provinces of the Second Republic of Poland (Białystok, Polesie, Nowogród, Wilno). The KPZB became an autonomous part of the KPP, spreading and implementing its main slogans taking into account the Belarusian specificity. The programme of the KPZB explicitly called for the separation of the area to the east of the Curzon line from Poland and for it to be annexed by the Red Army to the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic. The political shape of these lands was to be the same as in the whole USSR and to implement the doctrine of communism<sup>15</sup>. Belarusians and Ukrainians were encouraged to commit acts of disobedience to the Polish state (a refusal to pay taxes) and to use violence against the infrastructure and representatives of the security system (assaults on State Police officers).

This party, apart from propaganda activities, tried to organise direct actions or to take advantage of actions of other left-wing groups (socialists) by joining e.g. manifestations. In doing so, actions were taken against the police agency through the liquidation of informants or their control. In January 1931, within the framework of the KPZB, a combat group was created to cover demonstrations and rallies.<sup>16</sup> This group, however, had no greater combat value and did not show any activity.

The most famous sabotage and diversion action with the participation of KPZB members included the attack on the town of Stołpce, in August 1924, where the attackers killed seven policemen and one official. After the army took control of the situation, a number of arrests were carried out among KPZB activists, who in many cases were sentenced to death after being tried<sup>17</sup>. Communists connected with the KPZB, using the Trotskyist tactics of entryism, tried to infiltrate other organizations by taking control of their leadership and influencing the program so that the captured organization would implement the communist slogans and goals. Such an infiltration was performed on the Belarusian Peasants' and Workers' Hromada Party, founded in June 1925, which received electoral support to establish its parliamentary club in the Parliament of the Second Republic of Poland. The grouping proclaimed anti-system slogans, demanding, among other things, reunification with Belarus, which in effect led to its banning in 1927.<sup>18</sup>

The Communist Party of Western Ukraine was established in 1923, like the KPZB, and was also an autonomous part of the KPRP/KPP. Its activities extended to the following provinces: Lwów, Stanisławów, Tarnopol, Volhynia, Polesie and part of Lublin.

A characteristic feature of KPZB and KPZU was their close cooperation with intelligence and diversionary groups of Soviet Russia. National minorities constituted a convenient recruitment base for foreign countries. Moreover, the local population had a wide recognition of the border areas, which was willingly used during the

<sup>14</sup> Łukasiewicz S, *Zdrada stanu. Działalność Komunistycznej Partii Zachodniej Białorusi w Wilnie w latach 1930–1935. Ogrody nauk i sztuk*. 2012, No. 2, p. 75.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Łukasiewicz, p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> Baziur G, *Antypaństwowa działalność komunistyczna na Kresach Wschodnich II RP, jako czynnik geopolitycznej destabilizacji. Przegląd Geopolityczny*, 2016, Vol. 16, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

organization of sabotage activities. After the crossing to the Polish territory, sabotage and diversionary groups were joined by members of communist parties from the basic local unit of this organization (Jaczejka).<sup>19</sup>

Not only political movements of the extreme left but also the extreme right had their vision of independent Poland. The authorities of reborn Poland had to defend the political system against every extremity. As early as 1919, there was an unsuccessful coup d'état against the government of the independent left of Jędrzej Moraczewski. Its authors were among others Tadeusz Dymowski and Marian Januszajtis-Żegota. The coup d'état was not successful and its authors did not suffer any consequences. In December 1922, in the building of Zachęta, in the atmosphere of a media witch-hunt by the national right, the President of the Republic of Poland Gabriel Narutowicz was killed by a right-wing extremist.

An anti-system organization, of a national character, was established in 1923 in the Second Republic of Poland, the Polish Patriots' Emergency Service (PPP), whose members planned to carry out a coup d'état, but arrests of members of the management, carried out in January 1924, destroyed these plans.<sup>20</sup>

The May Coup d'état of 1926 and the takeover by the Sanacja group constituted a time caesura for the development of right-wing radicalism. Unable to fully develop its activities openly and legally, the radical national movement was forced to undertake conspiratorial activities, which entailed a shift to doctrinally radical positions. It should be noted that the 1930s, in particular, were marked by the strong development of the extreme right across Europe. The radicalization of views and attitudes on the right political scene led to the establishment of a number of ephemeral extreme organizations associated with Christianity, the national movement and monarchists.<sup>21</sup> A large-scale organization, operating in two ways through legal forms and in a conspiracy, was the Camp of Great Poland (OWP). It was established on the initiative of Roman Dmowski and the People's National Association (ZLN) in December 1924 in Poznań. The organization had the greatest influence in Silesia, Greater Poland and Pomerania, and the main social base was the academic communities. In the ideological declaration of December 1924, it was stated that OWP was 'an organisation of conscious forces of the nation, whose aim was to make it capable of taking a stronghold of its affairs, to make it the master of its fate in the full sense of the word' (Ideological Declaration of the Camp of Great Poland). The aim was also to focus the non-parliamentary (anti-Sanacja) opposition under the slogan of building a state based on the Catholic faith and a strong national character.

The organisation tried to create paramilitary structures to protect itself against the combat organisations of its political opponents. It also tried to influence veteran organisations and the army, preparing for more open military action.<sup>22</sup> In its activities, the organisation also used violence against its opponents. The taken actions and the spreading of slogans about the seizure of power from the hands of the Sanacja regime caused the reaction of the authorities, which decided that the OWP

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> Tomaszewicz J, *Paramilitarne struktury i działalność spiskowo-bojowa polskiej prawicy 1918–1933. Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i praktyka*, 2016, No. 2, p. 71.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73–81.

<sup>22</sup> Tomaszewicz, p. 84.

was preparing a coup d'état. Eventually, on March 28, 1933, the organization was dissolved, stating that 'This ordinance is motivated by the fact that the activity of the organization and members of the Camp of Great Poland, almost from the very beginning of its existence, was in clear conflict with the penal code and the orders of state authorities. The Camp of Great Poland — constantly causing excesses, disturbances and acts of violence — has become a factor that has led to confusion in the state, spreading anxiety, violating public order and security, fuelling political parties and racial hatred. The state authorities have shown a far-reaching tolerance towards the organisation by occasionally closing down its activities only in some provinces, or by subjecting only individual members of the O.W.P. to repression or individual preventive measures. However, the recent excesses in the provinces of Lwów, Kraków and Białystok, leading to general disturbances, proved that further toleration of the Great Poland Camp would be contrary to the interests of the state. Therefore, the Minister of the Interior decided to terminate the O.W.P. and in those provinces where it had not yet been liquidated by the authorities'.<sup>23</sup> After the OWP was outlawed, its members largely strengthened the youth organization of the National Party (SN) and, not agreeing with the moderate policy of the 'old' in the SN, established the National-Radical Camp (ONR). The latter organization was established in April 1934 and brought together the so-called 'young' people, who were the most radical group of the national movement. The activists of this organization preached the need for both spiritual and organizational transformation of the Polish nation. The state system they were striving for was to be based on corporate principles, where each member of the national community was to belong to a specific organization of workers and capital, respectively.<sup>24</sup> The basic values being in force in the state were to be based on Catholicism and hierarchical principles. ONR was also characterized by the rejection of democratic principles

The newly established organisation adopted the use of violence as one of the possible means of political activity, hence the clashes between the ONR and left-wing groups from the PPS and the Bund.<sup>25</sup> The events that must have triggered the reaction of the authorities were the demonstration of national radicals on the occasion of the May 3 celebration in Warsaw in 1934 and responding to it, the speeches of communists and socialists started on May 29. For several days on the streets of Warsaw there were armed skirmishes between militias of the extreme left and extreme right.<sup>26</sup> When a member of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), Hryhoy Maciejko, killed the Minister of the Interior Bronisław Pieracki in a successful assassination attempt in June 1934, it was initially assumed that ONR was behind this act and several hundred of the organisation's activists were detained, the leaders being imprisoned in an internment camp in Bereza Kartuska.<sup>27</sup> Finally, on July 10, 1934, the organization was banned. The official

<sup>23</sup> Andrzejczak M, *Przedmowa, Wskazania programowe Obozu Wielkiej Polski*. Ostoja, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Pater D, *Rewolucja na prawicy. Działalność Obozu Narodowo-Radykalnego w Wilnie w latach 1934–1938. Historia i Polityka*, 2008, Vol. VII, p. 79.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Jajeczniak K, *Ruch nacjonalistyczny, [in:] Polskie partie i ruchy społeczno-polityczne pierwszej połowy XX wieku*. Warsaw, 2010, p. 84.

<sup>27</sup> Pater D, p. 85.

reasons were to be: an armed attack on the PPS headquarters in Warsaw's Wola district on May 29, 1934, and the organization of street riots by the ONR.<sup>28</sup> The justification of the Warsaw mayor stated, among other things, that the reason for the ban was the fact that 'the activity of ONR members leads to a constant violation of security, peace and public order'. The use of firearms, fuelling racial hatred, issuing and disseminating illegal prints and organising street excesses were also pointed out.<sup>29</sup> Due to the new situation, ONR has moved to underground activities. Already in April 1935, there was a split in this organization and division into the National Radical-ABC Camp (ONR-ABC) and the Falanga National-Radical Movement (RNR Falanga).

The Falanga National-Radical Movement presented the most politically and socially extreme program and vision of the future state, which was to be organically connected with the nation.<sup>30</sup> The programme pointed out the importance of the Catholic faith and the hierarchical structure of Polish society. Democracy, including pluralism, was strongly rejected, stating that political parties were so harmful that there would be no place for them in the future political system. The deprivation of political rights of the Jewish population was announced, and the Jewish community was accused of behind-the-scenes influence on the activities of political parties.<sup>31</sup> Finally, apart from capital groups, communism and pan-Germanism were pointed out as the greatest threat to the Polish state.

ONR-ABC was gathered around the magazine 'ABC' and did not develop a coherent political doctrine.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, it started to create a network of outposts in academic centres, which in turn met with the reaction of the Minister of Education, who in 1937 outlawed all these organisations on charges of 'practising politics'.<sup>33</sup> The future system was to be constructed in such a way as to ensure economic self-sufficiency of the Polish nation. A significant obstacle to the development of the economic potential of the Poles was considered to be the Jewish community.

A separate issue related to the threat to the stability of the political system and the Polish state itself was the role of national factors in the activities of radical and extremist organisations and groups. Among national minorities, which to a greater or lesser extent found themselves in the interest of the relevant subjects of security due to internal security, there were German, Jewish, Belarusian and Ukrainian minorities. These groups could constitute a natural background for spying activities as well as sabotage and diversion. By their very nature, the neighbouring states carry out intelligence activities on the territory of their neighbours. Hence, each of the neighbouring countries could look for support for their activities in environments that were not willing to cooperate with the Polish state. The ideological basis for

<sup>28</sup> Rudnicki S, *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny. Geneza i działalność*. Warsaw, 1985, p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> Rudnicki S, *Rozbicie ruchu młodzieżowego 'obozu narodowego'*. *Dzieje najnowsze*, 1972, Vol. IX, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> *Zasady Programu Narodowo-Radykalnego, 1937*. *Electronic source*: <http://dlibra.umcs.lublin.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=12978>, accessed: 16.10.2019.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Kawęcki K, *Rozumienie nacjonalizmu w polskim ruchu narodowym w XX wieku*. [in:] *Ideologie, doktryny i ruchy narodowe. Wybrane problemy*. Lublin, 2006, p. 293.

<sup>33</sup> Jajecznik K, p. 37.



action against Poland was, as mentioned, communism. It was also the nationalism of national groups, which could strive to create their state at the expense of Polish territory. Spying activities could be expected among the German minority group dissatisfied with the sudden finding itself within the Polish borders, and a similar character could be seen in the cooperation for the benefit of the Bolshevik state on the part of Ukrainians or Belarusians.<sup>34</sup>

It should, therefore, be pointed out that as a result of suspicion of spying and diversionary activities for the benefit of Germany, one of the German minority organisations: *Deutschtumsbund zur Wahrung der Minderheitenrechte*<sup>35</sup> was dissolved in August 1923. This organization, through its branches in the field, conducted a reconnaissance of the political preferences of the population, national orientation, social relations, the activities of workers' organizations and associations (with an attempt to infiltrate them), companies and plants, registration addresses of Polish authorities, the state of educational infrastructure with an emphasis on the condition of buildings (this was seen as a reconnaissance of the possibility of seizing buildings for the needs of the army), the German population with American citizenship and localisation of villages, county offices and post offices<sup>36</sup>. Parties and organizations of the German minority with a nationalist character, operating after World War I in Poland were connected with the German state and from there they could receive financial aid and directives. Their anti-Polish stance and the recognition of the possibility of reintegration of the areas of the former Prussian partition into Germany are pointed out.<sup>37</sup>

The greatest threat to the integrity of the Polish state was caused by the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, whose aim was to create its own and independent national state.

At the convention organized in Prague on August 11, 1920, the Ukrainian Military Organization was established<sup>38</sup>. In 1929 the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists was established<sup>39</sup>, which, similarly to the UWO, assumed achieving independence through the use of military force, simultaneously trying to play the role of the political superstructure for the UWO.

Among the methods used by UWO one should mention arson attacks on private farms, murders of soldiers, gendarmes, representatives of the administration, murders of 'own people' and also classified as acts of sabotage attacks on the telecommunication, transport and energy infrastructure.<sup>40</sup> Significant actions aimed

<sup>34</sup> Mąciór-Majka B, *Rozpoznanie i zwalczanie obcego wywiadu przez Policję Polityczną II RP*, [in:] Przyborowska A (Ed.), *Kontrwywiad II RP (1914) 1918–1945 (1948)*. Warsaw, 2017, p. 226.

<sup>35</sup> Eser I, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!': die deutsche Minderheit in Polen und ihr Schulwesen 1918–1939. Nordost-Institut, Band 15, 2010, pp. 184–185; Holzer J, *Mozaika polityczna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warsaw, 1974, p. 276.

<sup>36</sup> Jaworski R, Wojciechowski M (Eds), *Deutsche und Polen zwischen den Kriegen. ... Amtliche Berichterstattung aus beiden Ländern 1920–1939*. Munich, 1997, p. 302.

<sup>37</sup> Holzer J, p. 278.

<sup>38</sup> *Ukrayins'ka Viys'kova Orhanizatsiya, UWO*.

<sup>39</sup> *Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins'kykh Natsionalistiv, OUN*.

<sup>40</sup> Kulińska L, *Działalność terrorystyczna ukraińskich organizacji nacjonalistycznych w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym*. *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 2010, No. 7–8, p. 45.

at intimidating the Polish community and the Ukrainians who did not want to support this organization concerned intimidation, e.g. letters addressed to particular individuals, in which their death sentences issued by the UWO were announced.<sup>41</sup> The means and methods of operation of this organization were different, from setting haystacks on fire through the use of dynamite (blowing up railway tracks), lignosite, hand saws (destroying telegraph poles), hand grenades (assaults on meetings in rooms), carborundum (an abrasive agent for damaging machine mechanisms such as steam locomotives) to revolvers.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, these groups had at their disposal bacteriological materials which were planned to cause epidemics among animals (glanders).

The first serious assassination attempt was made on 25 September 1921 on the head of state Józef Piłsudski and the Lwów governor who accompanied him. The murdered politicians were moderate supporters of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation: Tadeusz Hołówko and Minister of the Interior Bolesław Pieracki. By the way, after the murder of the latter in 1934, the government decided to establish a special detention facility for extremists in Bereza Kartuska. It was the first place where activists of the National-Radical Camp were kept. They were mistakenly accused of the assassination of the minister.<sup>43</sup> The individual terrorism of UWO/OUN was also directed against moderate supporters of national thought among Ukrainians. In 1922, the founder of the Ukrainian electoral block 'twerdochlib', prof. Sydor Twerdochlib was murdered because he protested against the activities of nationalist militias. In 1924, prof. Sofron Matwijas was killed in Przemyśl, and in 1925 there was an attempted murder of the director of the Ukrainian middle school in Przemyśl, Mykhail Hrycak.

Both UWO and OUN benefited from logistical, material and financial support from the intelligence services of Germany, Russia, Lithuania and Czechoslovakia, where special training centres were established for Ukrainians from UWO. In addition, part of the financial support came from Ukrainian emigration in the USA, from where the funds were sent legally to private individuals. It should also be pointed out that part of the funds also came from assaults on the means of transport, by which the money was transported — on July 30, 1930 — a post office ambulance near Bóbrka was attacked, and 26 thousand zlotys were robbed. During the attack a Polish policeman, Józef Molewski, was killed; on October 28, 1930, by killing one person and seriously wounding another, 13 thousand zlotys were robbed from a post office ambulance near Bełz. Terrorist actions were carried out by UWO mainly in two 'waves' — 'first UWO uprising' (1922–1923) and 'second UWO uprising' (1930). During the first uprising 301 terrorist attacks were recorded, while during the second one — 191 attacks.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout the whole period of existence of the reborn Republic of the interwar period, there was a need to maintain permanent vigilance of the state security services against threats from radicalism and political extremism. Because of the reluctance of the neighbouring countries (Germany, Bolshevik Russia),

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Albert A, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1918–1980*. Londyn, 1991, p. 219.

<sup>44</sup> Kulińska L, *Działalność terrorystyczna i sabotażowa nacjonalistycznych organizacji ukraińskich w Polsce w latach 1922–1929*. Cracow, 2009, p. 128.

counter-intelligence activities had to be carried out also taking into account the influence of these countries on the activities of radicals and extremists. The secret and specialised service, whose scope of activity was to identify all political and social activity in the country, as well as to prosecute perpetrators of crimes of an anti-state nature, was the political police in the Second Republic of Poland acting as a division of the State Police — political counterintelligence acted first as the Political Defence, and then the Information Service, the Political Police and the Investigation Service.<sup>45</sup> The defensive activities were initially focused on reacting to threats from espionage, communism, anti-state and anti-system (subversive) activities. Until 1926, communist groups, national minorities and radical Peasant Party members were of particular interest.<sup>46</sup> In the years 1922–1926, on the scale of the whole country (XVI police districts), 4989 people were arrested for communist activity; 2674 people for anti-state activity; 1070 people for spying activity.<sup>47</sup> After 1926, it was necessary to strengthen actions against anti-sanation groups, including in particular right-wing radicalism. The activation of both left and right-wing radicals took place in the 1930s. In 1935, 961 events of the nature of state crimes were recorded in the country (2822 people were detained); 3208 events of insulting power or office (382 people were detained); 1708 events of insulting state and nation (286 people were detained); 291 cases of belonging to secret organizations (1018 people were detained); 71 riots (11 026 participants, 347 people were detained); 8392 cases of incitement to crime (2835 people were detained).<sup>48</sup> The largest number of detentions concerning anti-state crimes was recorded in the provinces of eastern Lesser Poland (Małopolska) and Volhynia, i.e. areas inhabited by national minorities.<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusions

The interwar period in Poland was characterized by the existence of real threats to the internal security of the country, which originated from radicalism and political extremism. It was both left-wing and right-wing radicalism. One should point out here communism supported by Bolshevik Russia, Ukrainian nationalism supported by countries hostile to Poland, such as Germany or Czechoslovakia, and Polish right-wing radicals, who strove to change the country's political system but not to annihilate it. All these political trends could have contributed to the destabilization of the Second Republic, however, reborn Poland managed to create an appropriate system of internal security, and on the other hand, in its mass, Polish society, as the history of the Second Republic shows, was not seduced by political extremes.

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<sup>45</sup> Kędzierska G, Siemak Z, *Przestępczość polityczna w województwie lubelskim w okresie międzywojennym. Archiwum kryminologii*, 2012, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 603–604.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 603–604; Misiuk A, p. 189.

<sup>47</sup> Kędzierska G, Siemak Z, p. 615.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 618.

<sup>49</sup> Misiuk A, p. 223.

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**Streszczenie.** Artykuł dotyczy zagadnień radykalizmu politycznego jako zagrożenia dla odrodzonej Rzeczypospolitej. Okres międzywojenny w Polsce charakteryzował się występowaniem rzeczywistych zagrożeń dla bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państwa, których źródłem był radykalizm i ekstremizm polityczny, przy czym był to zarówno lewicowy, jak i prawicowy radykalizm. W artykule Autor zwraca również uwagę na komunizm popierany przez bolszewicką Rosję, ukraiński nacjonalizm popierany przez nieprzychylne kraje, takie jak Niemcy czy Czechosłowacja oraz polskich prawicowych radykałów, którzy starali się zmienić system polityczny kraju, nie doprowadzając jednakże do jego upadku. Wszystkie te tendencje polityczne mogły przyczynić się do destabilizacji II Rzeczypospolitej, ale odrodzonej Polsce udało się stworzyć odpowiedni system bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego, w skład którego wchodziła policja polityczna. Ponadto, jak pokazuje historia II Rzeczypospolitej, społeczeństwo polskie nie zostało zwiędzone przez skrajności polityczne.

**Zusammenfassung.** In dem Artikel werden Fragen des politischen Radikalismus als Bedrohung für die wiedergeborene Republik besprochen. Die Zwischenkriegszeit in Polen war gekennzeichnet durch das Auftreten von realen Bedrohungen der inneren Sicherheit des Landes, die ihren Ursprung im Radikalismus und politischen Extremismus sowohl im Links- als auch im Rechtsradikalismus hatten. Der Autor lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers auch auf den Kommunismus, der vom bolschewistischen Russland unterstützt wird, dann den ukrainischen Nationalismus — unterstützt von ungünstigen Ländern wie Deutschland oder der Tschechoslowakei und polnischen Rechtsradikalen, die versuchten, das politische System des Landes zu verändern, ohne jedoch zu seinem Zusammenbruch zu führen. All diese politischen Tendenzen mögen zur Destabilisierung der Zweiten Polnischen Republik beigetragen haben, aber dem wiedergeborenen Polen gelang es, ein angemessenes System der inneren Sicherheit zu schaffen, das die politische Polizei einschloss. Darüber hinaus wurde die polnische Gesellschaft, wie die Geschichte der Zweiten Polnischen Republik zeigt, nicht von politischen Extremen getäuscht.

**Резюме.** *Статья посвящена вопросам политического радикализма как угрозы для возрождающейся Речи Посполитой. В межвоенный период в Польше возникали реальные угрозы для внутренней безопасности страны, источником которых являлись радикализм (как левый, так и правый) и политический экстремизм. Автор обращает также внимание на коммунизм, поддерживаемый большевистской Россией, украинский национализм, поддерживаемый такими неблагоприятными странами, как Германия или Чехословакия, и польские правые радикалы, которые пытались изменить политическую систему страны, не приводя, однако, к ее разрушению. Все эти политические тенденции могли способствовать дестабилизации II Речи Посполитой, но возрожденной Польше удалось создать соответствующую систему внутренней безопасности, которая включала в себя политическую полицию. Кроме того, как показывает история II Речи Посполитой, польское общество не поддавалось влиянию политических крайних течений.*