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## Polish Army in its organisation phase on the turn of 1944 and 1945 illustrated with an example of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division and 8th Infantry Division

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World War II, followed by the post-war expansion of communism, was one of the major disasters the world struggled with in the last century.<sup>1</sup> It constituted a particular social, political, economic and military dimension for nations which the ideology was imposed on, and Poland was one of them. Stalin used the war with precision to create the communist empire. Relying on unprecedented terror, tested in his homeland, he aimed at the global revolution, which he partly managed to conduct. Weakness, naivety and perhaps cynicism of Western powers, which disregarded the provisions of the Atlantic Charter and accepted Stalin's accomplished fact policy, helped him.<sup>2</sup> Despite their declarations, the Tehran and Yalta resolutions of the Big Three, and the zones of influence which were consequently established, complemented contempt for interests of weak allies.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet regime driven by its war successes had in fact a decisive effect on the shape of post-war Europe and the world, remaining one of its key moderators. Ironically, owing to Stalin's propaganda, the model of a socialist state such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was perceived as moderately positive in many Western societies. Nothing wrong was noticed, or there was no intention of noticing anything wrong, which could bring pangs of conscience in the Western powers in connection with their former allies. As a result, the situation was just as Franklin Delano Roosevelt predicted in 1943, when he said that „(...) in the territory they occupy, the Soviets will do more or less what they please”.<sup>4</sup> And they did do and they did a lot. Time told what this Soviet socialism, with slogans covering criminal communist ideology in its Soviet edition, was like; early post-war years in particular. Becoming more and more hermetic, Churchill's „steel curtain” detached nations incapacitated by the USSR from western thought and culture for dozens of years; barring their development in this way. The flush of sovietisation which covered the Eastern and Central Europe introducing „dummy” national governments - which in fact were yielding to the Soviet dictatorship - swept at the same time everything that did not match the Soviet model of state, and actually everything that constituted an obstacle in introducing and strengthening this model. In this manner Stalin's plan imposing the Soviet way of thinking on satellite nations was being implemented, and by no means was it consciously chosen by these nations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 2015 *Nowy ład Stalina. Sowietyzacja Europy 1945–1953*, a book by Nikita PIETROV, was published. The work reveals mechanism of introducing and strengthening communism in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, also referring to territorial changes which took place there. The book is valuable as the process of sovietisation is presented in light of soviet sources.

<sup>2</sup> Among eight-point assumptions of the Atlantic Charter whose signatory was *inter alia* the Soviet Union, was the right of all nations to elect and have its own government and an independent state as well as to abandon all aspirations to obtain territorial and all other gains. However, the culmination of the accomplished fact policy was the transformation of the Polish Committee for National Liberation in the Temporary Government of the Republic of Poland, even though the British and American parties expressed their objections.

<sup>3</sup> The so-called Yalta system consisting in connivance to formation of zones of influence in the world.

<sup>4</sup> As cited in: KERSTEN (1989) 18. It is worth noting the fact that the President of the United States, having great affection and admiration for Stalin, was a proponent of broad collaboration with him. Consequently, President's fascination with the dictator led to too much submissiveness, which resulted in Stalin's hegemony in the territories occupied by the USSR. You can hear voices among historians that Roosevelt's attitude was the effect of the work of numerous Soviet agents present in his environment.

<sup>5</sup> In the Soviet communist system there was no place for individuals thinking independently.

It became clearer and with time even obvious, that western democracies turned out too weak and naive in confrontation with Soviet totalitarianism whose essence they did not fully comprehend. Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, a participant in the revolutionary movement in Russia, wrote in 1938 in his diary he kept in complete secrecy: „Foreigners understand nothing of our matters (...) except for the Poles who are overly comprehensive of what is happening at us (...). If they had a population of 60 million as the Germans, we would be finished. Fortunately, there are only 20 million of Poles”.<sup>6</sup> And perhaps due to the lack of understanding of the fact that Bolshevism does not allow any compromise, a new stage opened in the lives of the European national communities divided by the tide of Soviet influence, where a newly-established block of socialist states was marginalised for many years, moved to the periphery of the economic, cultural and consequently social development. Poland met such fate, a country which Stalin heavily disliked due to the course of the Russo-Polish war and the role he played in it.<sup>7</sup>

The intricate plan started to materialize as early as September 1939. The conquest and occupation of Polish eastern territory was just the beginning of brutal subjugation of the hated nation. On the other hand, the time of over 50-year trauma, which the Polish society was to go through on its way to self-determination, started; it was also the time of relentless fight for this freedom.

Formation of the Polish Committee for National Liberation (PKWN) in Moscow, which perturbed western partners of the Tehran Conference, has affected the destiny of the country. The PKWN, which actually was the second Polish government, established its position as the main centre of power in the country in a quick and decisive manner, taking over executive initiative in the territory successively conquered by the Red Army. The Committee wielded real authority over this land with the Soviet army and NKVD paving the way. Stalin, Beria and Molotov realized it perfectly well that without appropriate military support from them, the PKWN would not be able to hold power. „You have such power now that if you say two times two is sixteen, your opponent will agree. When I look at your work, I think that if the Russian Army was gone, in a week, you would also be gone. (...) they would shoot you as partridges” Stalin said about the illusory Polish government and their supporters.<sup>8</sup>

Local centres of power, without which the operations of the PKWN would be simply idle, started to spring up. At the same time, the PKWN was for these centres a guarantee of their existence in the territory of the country occupied by the Red Army, including those where it was particularly difficult to establish the people's state - the areas of eastern Poland. Thus, basing on the Soviet model, the PKWN organised the security service which became the main tool of wielding authority by the Lublin Committee. So the security offices and militia were formed as part of the repression system, compliant and totally subordinated to its Soviet counterpart i.e. the NKVD, which under the „Agreement between the Polish Committee for National Liberation and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on relations between the Soviet commander in chief and Polish administration after the Soviet army have entered the territory of Poland”, took over complete ruling over the Polish society. At the same time, at an extremely quick pace, further decrees, aimed at and hurting with all the force the independency structures and organisations which were in the opposition to communists and their vision of the post-war Poland, came into force. „Dekret Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego z dnia 24 sierpnia 1944 roku o rozwiązaniu tajnych organizacji wojskowych na terenach wyzwolonych” (Decree of the Polish Committee for National Liberation of 24 August 1944 on dissolution of secret military organisations in the liberated territory),<sup>9</sup> or decrees of 23 September 1944: „Kodeks Karny Wojska Polskiego” (Penal Code of the Polish Army),<sup>10</sup> „Przepisy

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<sup>6</sup> As cited in: KERSTEN (1989) 101.

<sup>7</sup> Stalin ignored the order of Kamenev, the commander-in-chief of the Red Army, relating to moving troops from the South-West Front under the command of Tukhachevsky who was planning to conquer Warsaw. Thus, Stalin's attitude contributed to the defeat of the Red Army soldiers in the Battle of Warsaw in the Russo-Polish war.

<sup>8</sup> It is a statement Stalin addressed to the PKWN delegates for Moscow talks in October 1944 as reported by B. Bierut and M. Żymierski. As cited in: KOPF, STARBA-BALUK (1999) 581.

<sup>9</sup> See: Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 3 item 12.

<sup>10</sup> See: Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 6 item 27.

wprowadzające Kodeks Karny Wojska Polskiego” (Regulations introducing the Penal Code of the Polish Army)<sup>11</sup> and „Prawo o ustroju Sądów Wojskowych i Prokuratury Wojskowej” (Law of Courts-martial and Military Prosecutor Office)<sup>12</sup> were just perfect examples of such actions.

Using the latter, a legal and disciplinary foundation was formed for the functioning of the Polish Army (WP), whose dynamic organisation was just commenced, in line with the set targets. The newly formed army, as Andrzej Friszke wrote, was intended as an instrument of Soviet policy aimed at introducing a communist regime in Poland, and its „people's character” was to emphasise the link with this new, socialist regime.<sup>13</sup> And consequently, apart from security officers and militia, soldiers of the revived Polish Army were given the task of supporting the new people's authority in its actions aimed at vassalization of the state under the dictation of the USSR, which could be seen very clearly in 1946 (the referendum) and in 1947 (the elections). Still, implicating the army in the implementation of these two great political forgeries was not the darkest page in its history. Its participation in fighting the independence underground, which was intensified and lasted till January elections, was classified as even a worse act. In this way the WP became an important tool in hands of new authoritarian administration serving a foreign state, which was aiming decisively at subjugation of the Polish people. The army, due to its power, constituted a crucial link in the newly-formed political system. Basing just on its human resources, one could „diplomatically” clear the country of „the reactionary underground”. That is why Stalin gave it so much attention.

The beginnings of the organisation of the revived WP date back to the first days of July 1944. Dreaming of commanding over-a-million army,<sup>14</sup> on 6th July 1944 Żymierski presented to Stalin the plan to extend it. The dictator did not give his consent to form such numerous Polish army, because he was simply afraid of its power at the time when Poland would be assimilated into the Soviet zone of influence (ignoring the fact that, as time told, the planes were unmanageable). The Polish Army Front which was being organised was to include only 400,000 soldiers and comprise 3 field armies (15 infantry divisions), 4 armoured corps, 15 artillery brigades, 2 heavy artillery divisions, 2 air corps, 3 sapper brigades, 3 barrier brigades and units of command, support and backing. Further reductions of the planned organisational structures of the WP took place after the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising. Stalin's distrust towards the Poles resulted in shrinking the million army to just a 330-thousand army based, as previously, on the Polish Army Front, having: 3 field armies (12 infantry divisions) and an armoured corps, an air corps and a heavy artillery division, as well as many other military units of different types.<sup>15</sup>

A bit earlier, dated as of 21 July 1944, the act of the State National Council (KRN) on taking control of the Polish Army (WP) organised in the territory of the USSR and combining it with the People's Army (AL) organised in the country, thus forming a uniform Polish Army, was published. In its text the document also referred to the issue of forming the „General Command of the Polish Army”<sup>16</sup> (NDWP), comprising *ex officio* the chief of the Head Quarters of WP (SGWP). At first, it was Spychalski, quickly replaced with Soviet generals: Władysław Korczyk, who was then replaced by

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<sup>11</sup> See: Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 6 item 28.

<sup>12</sup> See: Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 6 item 29.

<sup>13</sup> FRISZKE (2003) 103.

<sup>14</sup> Żymierski's ploy referring to the size of the future army is mentioned in E. Kospath-Pawłowski's work titled „Wojsko Polskie na Wschodzie 1943–1945”, section III (Wojsko Polskie Polski Lubelskiej (Wojsko Polski Lubelskiej). See: KOSPATH-PAWŁOWSKI (1993) 136.

<sup>15</sup> The above mentioned ventures were planned for three stages: until 15 September, 1 November and 1 December 1944, while as early as on 15 November the plan to establish 3rd Army of the WP was abandoned. See: KOSPATH-PAWŁOWSKI (1993) 136-137; JURGIELEWICZ (1973) 142. In the planned structure of the WP the armies did not have the corps level. Abandoning the formation of the operating detachment such as 3rd Army of the WP was mentioned in the contents of the order of Żymierski of mid November 1944. See: the Central Military Archive (henceforth: CAW), *Rozkaz Nr Org./59 z dnia 15 listopada 1944 r. NDWP, sygn. III-1-303, Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP, k. 139-140 (Order No. Org./59 of 15 November 1944 of the General Command of the Polish Army (NDWP), ref. III-1-303, Organisational orders of the NDWP, c. 139-140).*

<sup>16</sup> See: Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 1 item 2.

Bolesław Zarako-Zarakowski.<sup>17</sup> This way Stalin ensured himself the control over Polish main military authorities already in their early stage of organisation, disclosing at the same time his far-reaching distrust concerning the staff holding key positions in the command structures of the organised WP.<sup>18</sup>

Stalin also found another way to influence and acquire complete control over the military units formed under the Polish banner. He directed thousands of officers of the Red Army, who took up commanding positions, to serve in these units. As Bohdan Urbankowski wrote: „As far back as at the beginning of 1945, out of 40,000 officers there were 18,996 Soviet officers, mostly high in rank, including 36 generals”.<sup>19</sup> In newly formed units the proportions were even more frightening. The 4th Division of Anti Aircraft Artillery may be a perfect example here. The unit, which was intended to serve as the reserve of the NDWP, was formed in the Siedlce area based on Order No. 8 of 20 August 1944 issued in Lublin by the NDWP together with Appendix No. 11 referring to the organisational structures and headcount of the division.<sup>20</sup> In this force, in September 1944, only 4 officers serving in this unit were Polish; the others came from the Red Army and did not speak any Polish. What is more, out of 538 full-time non-commissioned positions only 15 were filled and out of 1,399 corresponding private soldier positions only 88 were taken.<sup>21</sup> Several weeks later, the situation did not change considerably. In mid October 1944 the headcount of the division increased from 2,177 to 2,290 soldiers. Ninety percent of the 109 officers serving in the division at that time were the Red Army soldiers (the headcount provided for 272 commissioned positions).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Sychalski was dismissed from the position of the head of the SGWP on 4.09.1944, whereas at the end of 1944 the position was retaken by Korzcyc.

<sup>18</sup> Lieutenant general Michał Rola-Żymierski, commander of the People's Army became the Commander-in-Chief. He also held the position of the head of National Defence Department of the PKWN; his deputies were major general Zygmunt Berling – commander of the Polish Army in the USSR and brigadier general Aleksander Zawadzki – the deputy commander for Politics and Education of the Polish Army in the USSR, the chairman of the Central Polish Communist Office, and the members of the command were colonel Marian Sychalski – as a head of the General Staff of the Polish Army and Jan Czechowski – the representative of the KRN. See: GRZELAK, STAŃCZYK, ZWOLIŃSKI (2003) 51. It is worth mentioning that Zawadzki was already a non-commissioned officer in September 1943. Frontczak presents some information on the tasks of the NDWP in his paper titled „Siły Zbrojne Polski Ludowej. Przejście na stopę pokojową 1945–1947”. See: FRONTCZAK (1974) 15-21.

<sup>19</sup> URBANKOWSKI (2010) 480. Historians are also of the opinion that such a number of the Red Army officers set their foot in the ranks of the WP from 1943 to 1945.

<sup>20</sup> CAW, *Rozkaz Nr 8 z dnia 20 sierpnia 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-303, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 6-7; *Ibid.*, *Załącznik Nr 11 do Rozkazu Nr 8 z dnia 20 sierpnia 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-303, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 26 (CAW, *Order No. 8 of 20 August 1944 of the General Command of the Polish Army (NDWP)*, ref. III-1-303, *Organisational orders of the NDWP*, c. 6-7; *Ibid.*, *Appendix No. 11 to Order No. 8 of 20 August 1944 of the NDWP*, ref. III-1-303, *Organisational Orders of the NDWP*, c. 26). The document specified the date of 1 November 1944 as the deadline for the formation of this unit. The division comprised *inter alia* 4 anti-aircraft artillery regiments: 77th, 79th, 81st and 83rd located as follows: 77th Regt. – in Wólka Wołyńska (as of 10.09.1944, in the source document the regiment is listed as number 67th); 79th Regt. – in Wyłazy (as of 14.09.1944); 81st Regt. – in Wołyńce (as of 13.09.1944); 83rd Regt. – in Wólka Wołyńska (as of 10.09.1944). Cited as in: *Ibid.*, *Schematy rozlokowania jednostek dywizji*, sygn. III-218-3, k. 1, 2, 4 (*Plans of deployment of division units*, ref. III-218-3, c.1, 2, 4).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, *Sprawozdanie [instruktora wydziału polityczno-wychowawczego 4. DAPlot, P.W.] z pracy za okres od 13 września do 19 września 1944 r.*, sygn. III-2-33, *Sprawozdania dekadowe z pracy polityczno-wychowawczej i meldunki o dezercji w 4 DAPlot.*, k. 1 (*Report [prepared by the instructor of the political and educational department of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division, P.W.] on work for the period from 13 September to 19 September 1944*, ref. III-2-33, *Decade reports on political and educational work and despatches on desertion in the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division*, c.1). Division headcount changed; this given in the text refers to the time frame specified in the source document.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, *Sprawozdanie [instruktora wydziału polityczno-wychowawczego 4. DAPlot, P.W.] z pracy za okres do 13 października 1944 r.*, sygn. III-2-33, *Sprawozdania dekadowe z pracy polityczno-wychowawczej i meldunki o dezercji w 4 DAPlot.*, k. 5 (*Report [prepared by the instructor of the political and educational department of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division, P.W.] on work for the period till 13 October 1944*, ref. III-2-33, *Decade*

Similar proportions were seen in other military units formed at that time, with the difference in the fact that infantry divisions, which were based to a lesser extent on commissioned officers who as a rule should have a specified (appropriate) military specialization (as for artillerymen and radio operators), the percentage was lower. The 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division was not an isolated case, and such cases could be listed again and again, at the same time one could ask a rhetorical question: Was there the Polish Army at that time?

„Dekret Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego z dnia 15 sierpnia 1944 r. o częściowej mobilizacji i rejestracji ludności do służby wojskowej” (Decree of the Polish Committee for National Liberation of 15 August 1944 on partial mobilisation and registration of populace for the military service),<sup>23</sup> did not bring intended results, which is reflected among other things in the process of organisation of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division. The process of supplementing the headcount of the units under formation was extremely painful; with several reasons behind that.<sup>24</sup> Resentment of many Polish citizens towards the WP, which was identified to a greater and greater extent with the new communist regime, was just one of them.<sup>25</sup> Another one was limited mobilisation capacity of the areas „liberated” from the German army. It is also a fact that the decree itself was a hidden blow in the independence organisations as it forced the members of these organisations to disclose and to join the WP, which was an attempt to weaken the structures of these organisations. Paradoxically, they were supported by citizens trying to avoid being drafted, who boycotted the mobilisation action in this manner.<sup>26</sup> Despite this fact, alongside many opportunists and conformists, also many patriots joined the ranks of the army to fight the German occupier. Many members of the conspiratorial military forces of the Polish Underground State and conspiratorial military organisations enrolled into the developing army. Despite intense political indoctrination, this section of the military community decreased the level of military discipline in its political plane, whereas general lax military attitude encouraged desertion, appropriation and intemperance. Of course, Stalin realised that the WP was infested with ideological opponents, which seems to be an intended action in a way. It was easy to „fish out” ideological enemies, no matter whether former or present ones, in the army which was hermetic and strict in terms of disciplinary regulations. Let us take the 8th Infantry Division of the revived WP as an example. Works on reorganisation of this tactical detachment commenced as early as the first days of August 1944. At first, it was supposed to be the so-called „partisan division”, which meant that Żymierski was planning to base its organisation on partisan troops, in this case the troops operating the Lublin area. It opened a possibility to organise the unit quickly and to incorporate and control within the ranks of the WP the organisations which were at least disinclined to the army formed under the USSR banner. That is why ideological differences which were among them were of some importance. And at the beginning of August 1944, it was not any cynicism on the part of the commander-in-chief with reference to at least one of the troops of the Home Army (AK). The base of the division was to be formed by the partisan build-up „Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła” commanded by lieutenant colonel Robert Satanowski.<sup>27</sup> Composed of two brigades with the total force of about

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*reports on political and educational work and despatches on desertion in the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division, c. 5).*

<sup>23</sup> Journal of Laws of 1944 No. 2 item 5.

<sup>24</sup> Thus, the PKWN issued another decree, this time on further partial mobilisation to the military service dated as of 30 October 1944. See: *Dekret Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego z dnia 30 października 1944 r. o dalszej częściowej mobilizacji do służby wojskowej* (Decree of the Polish Committee for National Liberation of 30 October 1944 on further partial mobilisation to military service, Journal of Laws 1944 No. 10, item 51).

<sup>25</sup> Jerzy R. Krzyżanowski, nom de guerre „Szpic”, a soldier of the Special Flying Squad of the AK, who joined the 8th Infantry Division in Siedlce and Siedlce area, reports the encounter between the AK soldiers, who wanted to join the newly formed WP, and the local people: „(...) they turned their back with disdain and disinclination when they heard that they would volunteer for a deployment with the new army.” As cited in: KRZYŻANOWSKI (1995) 216. For more information of the 8th Infantry Division see further sections of this paper.

<sup>26</sup> Independence groups, opposed to the PKWN, called for boycotting of the mobilisation action.

<sup>27</sup> Tadeusz Pióro, while mentioning the Satanowski and his military career, writes that Satanowski at the age of 27 had already the rank of colonel (acquired by means of verification), which he assigned himself. See: PIÓRO (1994) 26.

1,150<sup>28</sup> people the build-up had been operating in the Lublin area since spring 1944 and it was not an accident that it was here. Linked with the AL and, as a Soviet partisan unit, perfectly armed, it constituted good foundations for the construction of a new Polish infantry division, mostly owing to political correctness of the soldiers who served there. Satanowski was well informed about the plans to create the WP in the area to the east of the Curzone line. He passed this knowledge to Aleksander Sarkisov „Szaruga”, the commander of the Special Flying Squad of the AK (SOL AK), the second partisan unit whose staff joined the ranks of the 8th Infantry Division (DP). „Szaruga”'s forces were responsible for taking drops of arms and the silent-dark-ones in the assigned operating area from October 1943 to May 1944. The proximity of the area where Satanowski and Sarkisov operated resulted in their collaboration in joint military actions against the German occupying troops. This, in turn, led to the two commanders meeting again at the beginning of July 1944 and taking up further collaboration, now as soldiers of the Polish Army.

A significant encounter between Żymierski and Satanowski took place already on 4 August 1944. On this date the commander-in-chief entrusted him with the duties relating to formation of the division and he accepted. Bearing in mind set deadlines, Satanowski started his work on the organisation of the unit trying in the first place to provide commanding personnel, which in fact formed the unit foundations. Thus, he offered cooperation on formation of the division to Sarkisov, taking into consideration „Szaruga”'s and his soldiers' commanding skills. Then, it was a fact that the soldiers of SOL AK took up command positions in the structures of regiments included in the 8th Infantry Division, unfortunately, not for long. On 28th August 1944, they were dismissed from their positions, after a group of Soviet officers directed to serve in the divisions, led by the commander colonel Vasył Gulida, was unloaded at the Siedlce train station. Over several weeks, they were arrested, tried and sentenced to long imprisonment or death penalty; out of 9 of the highest possible adjudicated penalties, 8 were carried out. Świerczewski refused to grant power of pardon, writing just shortly „Rejected” on the applications. The soldiers were executed by firing squad.<sup>29</sup>

Those who fought for independent Poland, which could not be free, during the German occupation met such incomprehensible fate. As Stalin said: „Where there is a Soviet soldier, there is the Soviet Union” and unfortunately that was the case, with all its consequences which Polish society tried to oppose to, with no comprehensible result.<sup>30</sup>

General situation in the country was reflected directly in the climate in the army. The presence of thousands of Soviet soldiers only worsened the situation. Difficult conditions accompanying its formation and a deplorable procurement logistics process (which was understandable, taking into consideration the condition of the Polish economy, if at all we may talk about it at that time) were also of some importance. The army was literally short of everything. „At first, it was difficult to recognise the army in this bunch, only after several weeks people stopped „wearing civil duds” (...)” as the Chronicle of 36th Łużyce Infantry Regiment (Kronika 38. Łużyckiego Pułku Piechoty) said.<sup>31</sup> Whereas in order No. 0395-KG of the commander of the 1st Army of the WP of September 1945 on procurement logistics we can read that soldiers did not receive a full dietary norm or vegetables but

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<sup>28</sup> PIÓRO (1994) 26: gives the count of two thousand people.

<sup>29</sup> I gave information on the beginnings of formation of the 8th DP based on a book by J. R. Krzyżanowski *U „Szarugi”. Partyzancka opowieść* published in Lublin in 1995. See: KRZYŻANOWSKI (1995). The information included there was completely omitted in earlier works referring strictly to the 8th Infantry Division in the time of its organisation, for example a monograph by S. RZEPSKI „8 dywizja piechoty” (Warszawa 1970); „Regularne jednostki ludowego Wojska Polskiego. Formowanie, działania bojowe, organizacja, uzbrojenie, metryki jednostek piechoty” by S. KOMORNICKI (Warszawa 1977); „Jednostki wojska Polski Lubelskiej formowane na Ziemi Siedleckiej w 1944 roku” by E. PAWŁOWSKI („Szkieł Podlaskie”, 4, 1994); „8 Dywizja Piechoty w dziejach oręża polskiego” written by E. KOSPETH-PAWŁOWSKI, P. MATUSAK, D. RADZIWIŁŁOWICZ (Pruszków 1995), as well as two works by J. STRYCHAŁSKI: „Ludowe Wojsko Polskie w województwie siedleckim 1944–1945” (Siedlce 1983) and „Formowanie jednostek 2 Armii Wojska Polskiego w rejonie Siedlec” (Siedlce 1984).

<sup>30</sup> It is Stalin's well known saying, and looking at the present day Crimea is seems to be up-to-date.

<sup>31</sup> CAW, *Kronika [36. Łużyckiego Pułku Piechoty, P.W.] 08.1944-17.05.1949*, sygn. III-104-42, k. 3 (CAW, *Chronicle [of the 36<sup>th</sup> Łużyce Infantry Regt. P.W.] 08.1944-17.05.1949*, ref. III-104-42, c. 3). The 36th infantry regt. was one of three infantry regiments included in the 8th Infantry Division.

they ate chewy, underbaked bread; that they had meals on the floor, with no tables and benches and that the kitchen, canteen and bakery staff was often dirty and lousy, working without going through necessary medical examinations. „In the scope of uniform, sanitary and accommodation supplies, the situation is slightly better - still, it is far from the required standard” as the document read.<sup>32</sup> In the initial period many soldiers who came from the USSR paraded in Soviet uniforms, what made soldiers distrust the structures of the WP they belonged to. There were efforts made to eliminate it as soon as possible so that there were no doubts that the newly formed army is Polish. Naturally, due to the large number of the Red Army officers serving in the WP, internal communication became more of a problem. The majority of orders, dispatches and reports prepared in the military units was written in Russian. It was also often required from subordinates that they use Russian in work relations. It caused justified defiance in soldiers of all ranks; all the more reason was that a large proportion of soldiers were illiterate. There were efforts made to suppress this rebellion, and at the same time courses of the Polish language were organised for Soviet soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

While all officers who did not have appropriate command of Polish, and were assigned from the Red Army, were ordered to „wear only the uniform of the Red Army by the time they pass their Polish exam”.<sup>34</sup> The lack of clear division of competence resulted in command chaos, disorganising the functioning of military units and institutions. A diverging interpretation of orders and commanders' flexibility in their implementation or even their complete abandonment were a common situation.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, many of those who were directed to the army were the chronically ill, the disabled or invalids from auxiliary units, who were unable to serve.<sup>36</sup> It also happened that headcount was supplemented without informing the SGWP (directly from Regional Draft Offices), what was pointed out by Żymierski in his order No. 37 of 27 September 1944.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0395-KG z dnia 5 września 1945 r.*, sygn. III-102-1, 8 *Dywizja Zmechanizowana 32 Pułk Zmechanizowany – Rozkazy i Zarządzenia Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego rok 1945 1.01-31.12*, k. 41. (*Order No. 0395-KG of 5 September 1945*, ref. III-102-1, 8th *Mechanised Division 32nd Mechanised Regiment - Orders and regulations of the General Command of the Polish Army year 1945 1.01-31.12*, c. 41).

<sup>33</sup> See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0147 z dnia 27 czerwca 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPłot*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji w sprawach dyscyplinarnych, personalnych, szkolenia bojowego, uzbrojenia i administracyjno-gospodarczych [dalej: Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji]*, k. 205 (*Order No. 0147 of 27 June 1945 of the Commander of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command on disciplinary and personnel issues, battlefield training, armament as well as administrative and economic issues [henceforth: Orders and regulations of the division command]*, c. 205); Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 66 [brak daty wydania, P.W.] Dowódcy 4. DAPłot w sprawie nauki języka polskiego w Sztabie i Kwatermistrzostwie Dywizji*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 59 (*Order No. 66 [no date of issue P.W.] of the Commander of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on teaching of the Polish language in the Headquarters and Logistics of the Division*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 59) Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 67 [brak daty wydania, P.W.] Dowódcy 4. DAPłot w sprawie lekcji języka polskiego*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 60. (*Order No. 67 [no date of issue P.W.] of the Commander of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on Polish lessons*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command* c. 60).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0320-KG z dnia 1 sierpnia 1945 r.*, sygn. III-102-1, 8 *Dywizja Zmechanizowana 32 Pułk Zmechanizowany – Rozkazy i Zarządzenia Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego rok 1945 1.01-31.12*, k. 51. (*Order No. 0320-KG of 1 August 1945*, ref. III-102-1, 8th *Mechanised Division 32nd Mechanised Regiment - Orders and regulations of the General Command of the Polish Army year 1945 1.01-31.12*, c. 51).

<sup>35</sup> Such conclusions can be made based on the analysis of the orders and regulations of NDWP issued in 1945. See: Ibid., 8 *Dywizja Zmechanizowana 32 Pułk Zmechanizowany – Rozkazy i Zarządzenia Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego rok 1945 1.01-31.12*, sygn. III-102-1 (8th *Mechanised Division 32nd Mechanised Regiment - Orders and regulations of the General Command of the Polish Army year 1945 1.01-31.12*, ref. III-102-1)

<sup>36</sup> See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr ORG/75 z dnia 30 listopada 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-305, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 16 (*Order No. ORG/75 of 30 November 1944 of the General Command of the Polish Army*, ref. III-1-305, *Organisational orders of the General Command of the Polish Army*, c. 16).

<sup>37</sup> See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 37 z dnia 27 września 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-303, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 62 (*Order No. 37 of 27 September 1944 of the General Command of the Polish Army*, ref. III-1-303, *Organisational orders of the General Command of the Polish Army*, c. 62).

Discipline in military units and institutions was at a very low level, which was a symptom of rebellion of some military staff against the situation in the army. Some of them found it difficult to accept the deepening politicization of the army (its dependence on the new communist authorities). A perfect example may be the desertion of several hundreds of soldiers of the 31 Regt. of the 7th Infantry Division which took place on the night of 12 October 1944.<sup>38</sup> Certainly, it was the largest group desertion which happened in the Polish Army. Smaller group desertions or individual ones were a common occurrence e.g. in mid November 1944 in 1st Independent Mortar Brigade six such cases were reported,<sup>39</sup> whereas in 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division fourteen soldiers deserted from 1 January to 15 April 1945, and next four in July.<sup>40</sup> A complete lack of command authorities and organisational derangement in many areas of the army functioning was an additional element affecting the low level of discipline. „There is no military discipline, as people are ununiformed, they stand at checkpoints barefoot, and wearing hardly anything. (...) Poor morale, they do not feel they are the army” wrote a political and educational officer of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division in one of the work reports in September 1944.<sup>41</sup>

Officers, who were to set an example for troopers, frequently contributed to lowering of the morale of the army and to corruption of military discipline, which was helped by political and education officers who were to shape this order. „Among political and educational officers, one may see a clear loosening of discipline and lack of understanding of the work they do and positions they held. Often political and education officers themselves cannot live up to expectations and they even abuse power and disgrace the uniform of Polish officers, instead of setting an example to other officers”.<sup>42</sup> This is how the commander of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division wrote about out-of-work activities of a political and education officer of 2nd battery of 81st regiment of anti-aircraft artillery.<sup>43</sup>

In another paragraph of the same order (assessing the attitude of another political and education officer, this time from 1st battery 81st regiment of anti-aircraft artillery) he added: „There are cases that instead of working on educating soldiers in patriotic spirit, so that they hate the Germans

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 51 z dnia 16 października 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-303, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 104. (*Order No. 51 of 16 October 1944 of the General Command of the Polish Army*, ref.III-1-303, *Organisational orders of the General Command of the Polish Army*, c. 104).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., *Pismo dowódcy 1. SBM w sprawie przeprowadzenia przysięgi wojskowej w pododdziałach brygady kierowane do dowódcy artylerii WP z dnia 13 listopada 1944 r.*, sygn. III-185-1, *Meldunki o stanie bojowym oraz dyslokacji brygady i jednostek podległych 9.10.1944-27.06.1945*, k. 9 (*Letter of the Commander of 1st SBM on organisation of military oath in subdivisions of the brigade addressed to the commander of the Polish Army artillery of 13 November 1944*, ref. III-185-1, *Reports on general state of alert and dislocation of the brigade and subordinate units 9.10.1944-27.06.1945*, c. 9).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 082 z dnia 19 kwietnia 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie środków w walce z dezerterstwem w jednostkach 4-ej Dywizji Artylerii Przeciwlotniczej RND W.P.*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 93 (*Order No. 082 of 19 April 1945 of the Commander of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on measures to combat desertion in units of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division of the Polish Army*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 93); Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0183 z dnia 26 lipca 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie dezercji w oddziałach*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 241 (*Order No. 0183 of 26 July 1945 of the Commander of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on desertion in the units*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 241).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., *Sprawozdanie [instruktora wydziału polityczno-wychowawczego 4. DAPlot, P.W.] z pracy za okres od 13 września do 19 września 1944 r.*, sygn. III-2-33, *Sprawozdania dekadowe z pracy polityczno-wychowawczej i meldunki o dezercji w 4 DAPlot.*, k. 1 (*Report [prepared by the instructor of the political and educational department of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division, P.W.] on work for the period from 13 September 1944 to 19 September 1944*, ref. III-2-33, *Decade reports on political and educational work and despatches on desertion in the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division*, c. 1).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 054 [brak daty wydania, P.W.] Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie oficerów pol-wych.*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 28 (*Order No. 054 [no date of issue, P.W.] of the Commander of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on political and educational officers*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the Division Command*, c. 28).

<sup>43</sup> This officer, who abused alcohol: „(...) being under influence, he came to the flat of a Polish watchmaker, he gave him hell, shot at the doors and windows and in the end he demanded to be given two watches”. Ibid.

and are friendly towards the USSR, political and education officers induce the opposite effect due to their behaviour, work system and attitude towards soldiers. (...) Instead of educating soldiers in hatred towards the Germans, he himself [the political and education officer of 1st battery of 81st regiment of anti-aircraft artillery, P.W.] lived openly with a German woman [sic!] and while talking to her he besmeared the Red Army saying that: „We, Poles [sic!] don't want to act like the Russians [sic!] who loot and kill people”.<sup>44</sup> Such attitude of „the uniformed educators” quickly spread onto the rest of the military society.

Apart from desertion, it was alcohol which constituted a real threat to formation of military discipline. In source documents referring to the functioning of the army at that time we may find frequent mentioning of the servicemen abusing it. The problem annoyed the WP and was present at all command level (in all personnel groups). It was alcohol that was the reason for the transfer at first and next the dismissal of the head of staff of 77th regiment of anti-aircraft artillery and other officers of this regiment.<sup>45</sup>

An interesting situation, where the servicemen participated, also took place in Lublin, where after constantly repeated shootings, the commander decided to intervene. „Commanders of military divisions, plants and institutions shall ensure under personal penalties that the constantly repeating shootings in Lublin stop. Those guilty should be held responsible” he wrote in a September order in

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<sup>44</sup> While working on soldier education, this officer: „(...) used the system of threats, terrorized subordinates with gun at every occasion, called soldiers „bandits and thieves””. Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., *Sprawozdanie dekadowe [oficera polityczno-wychowawczego 4. DAPlot, P.W.] za okres do dnia 10 grudnia 1944 r.*, sygn. III-2-33, *Sprawozdania dekadowe z pracy polityczno-wychowawczej i meldunki o dezercji w 4 DAPlot.*, k. 46 (*Decade report [prepared by the instructor of the political and educational department of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division, P.W] for the period till 10 December 1944*, ref. III-2-33, *Decade reports on political and educational work and despatches on desertion in the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division*, c. 46).

Officers of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division (81st regiment of anti-aircraft artillery) participated in a very interesting situation which happened during an evening party for officers organised on 3 May 1945, when there was a fight between officers, who as expected were under influence of alcohol. As the division commander put it, the reason for the fight were „women from the street” invited to this party. The consequence (also of other events that happened there) was that the commander banned such nights for officers of the regiment. The Red Army officers serving in the division (the regiment) played the most important part in these events. See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 009 z dnia 6 maja 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie: o oficerskim wieczorze w 81 p.art.p.lotn. w dn. 3.5.1945 r.*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 129 (*Order No. 009 of 6 May 1945 of the Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on officers party in the 81<sup>st</sup> regiment of anti-aircraft artillery on 03.05.1945*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 129).

A few days later, on 20.05.1945, a similar night was organised for officers of 77th regiment of the anti-aircraft artillery of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division. It was even „more interesting”, which was reported by the division commander and it is worth mentioning: „When I arrived at this evening party for officers at 11 p.m. I noticed that 50% of those at the tables were drunk, some officers were wearing civil clothes, there were women, also intoxicated, at the side of each officer, who the officers sitting at the tables were embracing and kissing. The women seemed to be prostitutes rather than guests. The room was quite sombre and the whole thing looked like a night at a second-rate cabaret rather than a cultured evening party for officers. The commander of the regiment lieutenant colonel Trofimov and his deputy for politics and education still do not understand that the evening party for officers is an opportunity to spend time in a cultured way and to entertain and it is not the night of drinking and debauchery. Returning from this evening party for officers I met colonel Atrasimov who took off his cap and uniform and put them on a woman he was bracing. When I remarked that he breached the regulations on uniforms he replied that „she was cold so I gave her the uniform””. Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 109 z dnia 24 maja 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie dyscypliny stanu osobowego w 77 p.a.p.l.*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 153 (*Order No. 109 of 24 May 1945 of the Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on discipline of staff in the 77<sup>th</sup> regt. of the anti-aircraft artillery*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of division command*, c.153).

Another interesting event related to alcohol abuse among officers took place also on 20.05.1945 in the same unit, where an officer of 77th regiment of anti-aircraft artillery of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division: „(...) intoxicated, he went to the soldier accommodation of his platoon, where he fell over [sic!] soldier's beds and vomiting, he soiled them”. Ibid.

1944.<sup>46</sup> Other symptoms of breaching disciplinary rules were soldiers' freedom of wearing a uniform, petty thefts, fights, owning illegal guns, and also all types of lawless requisition performed on the civilians. These were mostly bikes and household appliances that fell prey to soldiers, but the loot included also motorbikes and cars. Of course, it had negative repercussions in the society, destroying the image of the Polish army, which was supposed to be immaculate.<sup>47</sup>

Elimination of this problem was not easy, and at that time perhaps even impossible. Such examples of breaching military discipline are abundant; what is more, they are reflected in source documents and orders of commanders of various ranks. They show that it was a serious problem and there were attempts to deal with it using a system of punishments and rewards applied in the army. Disciplinary practice in 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division shows that it was not an easy task. The number of punishments used in this squad as compared to the number of rewards in the reporting period of 1 June to 15 August 1945 was very high (419 punishments, 1077 rewards).<sup>48</sup> In most of the documents on military discipline, commanders express their rather sceptical opinions as if they did not believe that improvement was possible in those conditions. The level of discipline was also significantly influenced by establishing of the peer tribunals of privates of Polish Army or honour peer tribunals for non-commissioned and commissioned officers, which were to uphold discipline in their communities.<sup>49</sup> It was a well-thought direction of bottom-up control of the military environment within separate personnel groups, yet it was not very effective. Thus, attempts to put this national, cultural and social mixture together in a powerful monolith were not easy.

Developed under the Soviet banner at the turn of 1944 and 1945, the Polish Army concealed numerous organisational glitches in its structure. Lack of proper logistic support in individual services was linked directly to the condition of the Polish state, its economic efficiency and lack of material support from the USSR. It was a grave problem for the military community, especially if we consider

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<sup>46</sup> See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 14 z dnia 2 września 1944 r. NDWP*, sygn. III-1-303, *Rozkazy organizacyjne NDWP*, k. 35-36 (*Order No. 14 of 2 September 1944 of the NDWP*, ref. III-1-303, *Organisational orders of the NDWP*, c. 35-36).

<sup>47</sup> For example, one of the non-commissioned officers of 79th regiment of anti-aircraft artillery of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division required for the army a sewing machine, he was punished by the division commander with 10 days of close arrest. See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0159 z dnia 7 lipca 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie bezprawnej rekwizycji*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 222 (*Order No. 0159 of 7 July 1945 of the Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on lawless requisition*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 222).

As far as fights were concerned, there were also cases of subordinates being beaten by superiors, which, of course, was heavily condemned by the commanders. And in this line, the head of mobile artillery workshops of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division (a master corporal) beat 3 of his subordinates, while he was under the influence of alcohol. As punishment he was demoted to a private and additionally, he was punished with 5 days of ordinary arrest and transferred to 81st regiment of anti-aircraft artillery to operate a cannon. See: Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 061 [data wydania nieczytelna, P.W.] Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie: o awanturach i rękoczynach szefa ruchomych warsztatów artyleryjskich dywizji*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 55 (*Order No. 061 [illegible date of issue, P.W.] of the Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-aircraft Artillery Division concerning arguments and fights of the head of the division mobile artillery workshop*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 55). Also a non-commissioned officer of 77th regiment of anti-aircraft artillery committed fisticuffs against his subordinate and he also was demoted to a private. Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0121 z dnia 7 czerwca 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot w sprawie niewłaściwego obchodzenia się przełożonych z podwładnymi*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 171 (*Order No. 0121 of 7 June 1945 of the Commander of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division on superiors' inappropriate dealing with subordinates*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 171).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., *Rozkaz Nr 0227 z dnia 1 września 1945 r. Dowódcy 4. DAPlot*, sygn. III-218-37, *Rozkazy i zarządzenia dowództwa dywizji*, k. 285 (*Order No. 0227 of 1 September 1945 of the Commander of the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division*, ref. III-218-37, *Orders and regulations of the division command*, c. 285).

<sup>49</sup> The statute of tribunals (including the system of penalties used in corps) and more information on their operations in 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division Ibid. *Statut oficerskich sądów honorowych, protokoły z zebrania podoficerów w sprawie wyboru sądu koleżeńkiego oraz meldunki o działalności sądów 24.10.1944-31.08.1945*, sygn. III-218-65 (*Statute of the honour officer tribunals, minutes of the meeting of non-commissioned officers on the election of peer tribunals and reports on tribunal operations 24.10.1944-31.08.1945*, ref. III-218-65).

the provision of sanitary items, food and uniforms. On the other hand, lack of sufficiently educated officers, but also of non-commissioned officers, who generally presented poor (or no) leadership skills affected the state of alert and morale of the soldiers. We cannot disregard a political aspect here. The army was under strict supervision of the new communist authorities, who as it was mentioned in the introduction, served a foreign power which some soldiers did not intend to serve. That's where their attitude to military service and the Soviet uniform came from. Gaps in the officer corps, which were probably the key organisational problem of the WP, were filled by drafting pre-war officers or those who came from the AK and other independence organisations.<sup>50</sup> Treated with deep distrust, they started to pose a serious problem to the Soviet principals at a later time.

Another issue was that fact that many servicemen started their service in the army in the USSR (where they were held against their will) already in 1943; whereas joining the army by Wasilewska and Berling was the only way to escape from this „inhuman land”. Many Poles, who had not managed to join the army formed under the command of general Władysław Anders (due to the operations of the USSR army and administration which tried to prevent citizens from getting into the areas where the units were organised) and then to evacuate with this army, took this opportunity.

The limits of ideological freedom in the army were set by the scope of intervention in this freedom, which was carried out in a thoughtful and managed manner. The directive of the Main Political and Educational Board of the Polish Army specified clearly that: „(...) there is no room for any concessions to the AK (...) they have to break with their past, condemn it and separate from it (...), they have to understand that (...) they came to us from a grouping which carried out operations hostile [sic!] to Poland, whereas we represented and still represent (...) the Polish reason of state. Supporters of the "neutral" or conciliatory attitude to the AK should be treated as the AK members unless they show in the near future that they actively fight the AK”.<sup>51</sup> This stance was quickly toughened, what resulted in a wave of desertion in the revived WP.<sup>52</sup> Persecutions of soldiers of independent descent were an everyday practice of this uneasy service, which was an intended element of sovietization of the Polish army.<sup>53</sup> Repressions - as means of reprisal - and the staffing policy mentioned above were applied both in 8th Infantry Division as well as in the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division and other units of the WP for many long months, until the army was „cleared” of the „reactionary element”. The climate in the army was getting worse and worse each month. The service atmosphere among soldiers was becoming more and more tense as a result of partitions between them. In this situation a mutiny in the army was quite likely, which the Soviet command, with Stalin at the top, were aware of, being afraid of losing control over a portion of the formed military units when the World War II finished. That is why an appropriate selection of commanding staff from the lowest to highest level was so important, at the same time ensuring a correct course of the process of political indoctrination of the army. Therefore, the course of everyday service was not easy both in the conditions of the military operations of the World War II as well as in the later period, when the communist authorities sent regiments of the WP to fight the independence underground under the banner of democracy in the country, which they actually destroyed.

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<sup>50</sup> Paweł Wiczorkiewicz writes that: „Admittedly, Żymierski himself claimed that: „he has his officers whom he will train and educate to be people's officers” but it was a programme for the future and even he had an intention and had to base on pre-war and conspiratorial human resources at first”. WIECZORKIEWICZ (2006) 487.

<sup>51</sup> As cited in: WIECZORKIEWICZ (2006) 487-488.

<sup>52</sup> It is estimated that about 25 thousands soldiers deserted the people's army from 1943 to 1948.

<sup>53</sup> For discussion of sovietisation of the WP and the Red Army soldiers serving in its ranks see *inter alia* the following: NALEPA (1995); TOMASZEWSKI (2012); NALEPA (2014).

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## **Summary:**

Polish Army in its organisation phase on the turn of 1944 and 1945 illustrated with an example of 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division and 8th Infantry Division

In 1944, in line with the prepared plans of the extension of the Polish Army, the following military units were formed already in the course of military actions of World War II in the Siedlce area: the 8th Infantry Division, the 4th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division and the 1st Independent Mortar Brigade. Totally, the headcount of the formed tactical detachment was supposed to reach 15 thousand soldiers.

Numerous organisational and logistic glitches could be seen in the formation stage of the military units mentioned above. They affected the quality of military service, leading to relaxation in the ranks of the Polish Army. Hostility of many lower rank servicemen (but not only them) towards Soviet officers, who joined the newly organised Polish Army, was an additional factor which made this situation even worse. Raising this issue, the Author sets it in the context of political and social changes taking place in Poland after the Polish Committee for National Liberation was established. He also refers to military discipline, which remains one of the key threads of this paper, and which actually posed a serious problem to the General Command of the Polish Army.

**Keywords:** Polish Army, Artillery, Infantry, World War II