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Doctoral Dissertation Abstract:

Political thought of Poland's communistic leaders in the years 1944-1980

The subject of the thesis is the political thought of Poland's communistic leaders: Bolesław Bierut, Jakub Berman, Edward Ochab, Władysław Gomułka and Edward Gierek. The period studied comprises the years 1944-1980 because 1944 is marked as the beginning of the communistic regime in Poland and 1980 is the time when both the Independent Trade Union „Solidarity” (NSZZ “Solidarność”) was founded and the 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) Edward Gierek stepped down.

The dissertation aims at a presentation of beliefs held by communistic leaders of Poland in the issue towards: the USSR, economic policy of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) and the Catholic Church. Another area of research is the leaders' activity in the scope of politics and law.

While carrying out research on the political thought of Poland's communistic leaders, one should notice a gradual evolution of the communistic system in the PRL. In the years 1944-1980, in the period of stalinism in Poland, the following communistic leaders: Bolesław Bierut, Jakub Berman and Edward Ochab implemented soviet patterns, such is collectivisation in agriculture, nationalisation of industrial property and fighting the Catholic Church. Their attitude towards the USSR was characterised by a vassal-type approach caused by the fear of losing power. After Josph Stalin's death, a process of destalinisation took place in Poland. People holding power in the communist party in the years 1956-1980 - the 1st Secretaries of the KC PZPR, Władysław Gomułka and Edward Gierek, introduced their own political economic concepts (such as: “Polish road towards socialism” and “construction of another Poland”). By giving up collectivisation, Władysław Gomułka and Edward Gierek opted for relations with the USSR based on partnership, not dependence, and they perceived power in the Catholic Church which should be taken into account as clergy enjoyed great support in the Polish society. Yet, none of the five communistic leaders described in the dissertation, risked execution of their power without the support and alliance with the Soviet Union. None of them tried at least partial democratisation of the system, as this would mean a denial of Marxist-Leninist ideology which each of them believed in, irrelevant of the experience and personal past they had.

Apart from the introduction and ending, the dissertation has four chapters and a bibliography divided into archival and printed sources, literature and netography.

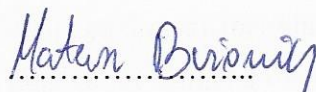
The first chapter chronologically shows a historical context to illustrate events characteristic of the period studied. The contents of this chapter include political history of the People's Republic of Poland until the year 1980, starting from the birth of the communistic system in Poland until the events associated with the creation of the NSZZ „Solidarność”.

In the second chapter, three communistic leaders, namely Bolesław Bierut, Jakub Berman and Edward Ochab, were discussed chronologically. The collection of the above-mentioned individuals in one chapter was due to the fact that they executed their power from the moment when the communists took over until the end of the stalinism in Poland, that is in the years 1943-1956.

The third chapter is devoted to Władysław Gomułka's beliefs. Starting from his assignment as the 1st Secretary of the KC PZPR in October 1956 until his resignation in December 1970. Władysław Gomułka's concepts were presented against events characteristic of his period.

In the fourth chapter, Edward Gierek's thought, since his election for the 1st Secretary of the KC PZPR until his removal in September 1980, was presented.

The dissertation has also an ending where its author attempted at a reply to the question posed in its introduction.



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