Articles

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Stalinism in Poland

Abstract

The article presents, in a synthetic manner, the mechanism of introducing the Stalinist system in Poland and describes its essence. It points to the importance of – until now given less value in the relevant literature – the mechanism of elimination of institutions and persons representing the constitutional order and state-creating social fabric, as well as introducing in their place representatives of the lowest social classes and institutions impersonating Polish centres of power, but in fact fully dependent on the USSR. The text focuses on political and social issues, as well as on the extensive repression apparatus.

Keywords

Stalinism, totalitarianism, "people's" Poland, communism, repression apparatus, ideology, Joseph Stalin, Bolesław Bierut, Stalinist system

1. Stalinism

Stalinism is a termused in the related literature to define the period of the rule of Joseph Stalin – first in the USSR, then in the Eastern Bloc – but, above all, to define the methods of exercising his authority. The term is, however, not precise, and the periodization of this phenomenon also varies.[1] However, it can be assumed that in the USSR Stalinism had crystallized in the 1930s, and after the war it was instilled in the countries occupied by the Red Army. The decline of the ideology and system of exercising power is associated with the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953.However, in the Eastern bloc countries the turning point cameonly later. With regard to the "people's" Poland, those historians who accept Stalinism as a form of ideological pressure, believe that it began in 1948. On the other hand those who recognize repression and intimidation of society to be the leading features of Stalinismmark its beginning in 1944. For the purposes of this article, it is assumed that Stalinism in Poland began in 1944, along with the occupation of its territory by the Red Army, to reach its mature form in 1948. It finished in 1956, the year of the political "thaw" and the change of the tools of exercising power.

Undoubtedly, it should be said that in the history of Poland the Stalinist years constituted a period, during which the communist party exercisedtotalitarian power. The years 1944–1948 should be considered as the time during which the totalitarianism would attain its full form, to be then followed by erosion between the years 1954–1956. It seems that although the discussion between historians and political scientists continues, the political system in the post-1957 People's Republic of Poland should be described as a system with strong totalitarian tendencies.

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[1] See definitions of Stalinism in e.g.: *Leksykon historii powszechnej 1900–1945*, ed. S. Sierpowski in collaboration with S. Żerko, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1996, pp. 415–416; J. Palmowski, *Słownik najnowszej historii świata 1900–2007*, v. 5: *przyunia*, Rzeczpospolita, Prószyński i s-ka, Warszawa 2008, pp. 115–116; *Słownik polityki*, ed. M. Bankowicz, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1996, pp. 263–264; See also: L. Kołakowski, *Główne nurty marksizmu*, p. III: *Rozkład*, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań, no date of issueavailable, pp. 7–220.

2. The Stalinisation process in the political, social, and economic spheres

In connection with the approach adopted for the purposes of this paper, t the basic elements of the process aimed at installing the Stalinist system in Poland will be indicated. As intended by Moscow, the areas occupied by the Red Army at the end of the World War II were to remain in the Soviet sphere of influence. In the case of Poland, these plans were complicated owing to the existence of constitutional authorities in exile and civil and military structures of the Polish Underground State in conspiracy. Therefore, the Soviet plans provided for the formation of institutions imitating the Polish authorities, though fully dependent on the Kremlin and for their presentation on the international arena as democratic bodies. The concept held that the role of the substitute of legislative power was to be exercised by the State National Council (Krajowa Rada Narodowa, KRN), while the executive power would be exercised by the Polish National Liberation Committee (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego, PKWN), transformed subsequently into a Provisional Government. This set off the process of forming, under the protection of the Red Army, the communist administration in the territory which, in line with Stalin's intention, were to become the post-war Poland.[2] The importance of the foregoing statement lies in the fact that virtually half of the pre-war territory of the Polish Republic was incorporated into the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, in the west and north, after the preliminary findings made at the Teheren conference, by way of decisions made at conferences in Yalta and Potsdam, Poland obtained new territories at the expense of the Third Reich. In the territories incorporated into the USSR there was the establishment of the Soviet administration of the Lithuanian, Belarussian and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republics. In the post-Yalta Poland, a communist administration was created, while, at the same time, the civilian and military structures of the

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[2] See e.g.: K. Kersten, *Narodziny systemu władzy. Polska 1943–1948*, Kantor Wydawniczy SAWW, bmw, 1990; Eadem, *Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem. Polska 1944–1956*, Aneks, bmw, 1993; See also.: R. Bäcker, *Ewolucja niesuwerenności PRL. Typy podległości kraju podporządkowanego wobec totalitarnej metropolii*, in: *W objęciach Wielkiego Brata. Sowieci w Polsce 1944–1993*, ed. K. Rokicki, S. Stępień, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2009, pp. 47–56; *Polska-ZSRR. Struktury podległości. Dokumenty WKP(b) 1944–1949*, prepared by A. Kochański, A. Paczkowski i in., Instytut Nauk Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 1995; A. Skrzypek, *Mechanizmy uzależnienia. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1944–1957*, Akademia Humanistyczna w Pułtusku, Pułtusk 2002.

Polish Underground State were liquidated by the Soviet NKVD. Indeed, until the autumn of 1945, the Soviet secret services played a key role in the destruction of the Polish independence conspiracy.[3] The last mass pacification action conducted by the NKVD and the Red Army in the Polish territory was the so-called Augustów roundup in July 1945, as a result of which some 600 people, recognized by the Soviets as activists of the Polish underground, were arrested and murdered.[4]

The process of installing the communist administration would be either preceded by, or carried out along with, the operation of liquidating the underground bodies of the Polish constitutional authorities, which was accompanied by Stalin's denial on the international arena of the legal Polish authorities in exile.

For the power overtaking stage to end successfully, for the communists who enjoyed minimal political support, to take full control over the state, the "political engineering" mechanisms had to be supported by the "social engineering" and "terrorism engineering" processes.

The first one consisted in the reconstruction of the social fabric, and its essence boiled down to reversing the social ladder. The pre-war political elites were pushed to the margins of social life, and a mechanism was created for promoting the existing lowest social class, on the condition, however, that they would declare their support for the new system.

The logic of this process worked to the rhythm of the so-called social reforms which were ostensibly aimed at pursuing the goals of socialist equality in access to goods. In practice they disrupted some social strata and led to the monopoly of the communist state of the property and labour market. Such changes included:

- the 1944 "land reform", which caused the pauperization of landowners;
- the nationalization of the key industries which affected private entrepreneurs;
- the so-called "Battle for trade" which affected private entrepreneurs and craftsmen;

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[3] P. Kołakowski, *NKWD i GRU na ziemiach Polskich 1939–1945. Kulisy wywiadu i kontrwywiadu*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa 2002; G. Motyka, *Na białych Polaków obława. Sowieckie wojska NKWD w walce z polskim podziemiem 1944–1953*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2014; *NKWD i polskie podziemie 1944–1945. Z „teczek specjalnych" Józefa W. Stalina*, ed. A. F. Noskowa [Polishedition A. Fitowa], Universitas, Kraków 1998.

[4] *Obława Augustowska – lipiec 1945 r. Wybór źródeł*, ed. Jan Jerzy Milewski, Anna Pyżewska, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Białystok 2010.

- the nationalization of the service industry, specifically affecting craftsmen;
- the education "reform" (including higher education), which resulted in removing part of the pre-war professorship from schools and universities;
- collectivization which affected the richer (and usually more enlightened) layers of the peasantry;
- the principle of the secularity of the state, which affected the clergy, primarily, the Catholic one.[5]

This process was aggravated by the activities related to the elimination of organizations and environments invoking the idea of an independent Polish Republic. One can just imagine the scale of social changes which led to virtually the total reconstruction of the social structure and hierarchy.[6] This was all the more so because these deliberate political actions were carried out under conditions of enormous war losses, and were accompanied by a process of population relocation, so far unprecedented in the history of Poland. As a consequence of the war losses and redrawing of borders, the population of Poland dropped to approximately 24 million people, which meant that with respect to the Second Polish Republic, we lost almost 30% of the population. Another problem was the condition of the society which resulted from both military actions and the intentional policy of both occupants –the German and the Soviet ones. The consequence of redrawing borders and war damage was mass migration and resettlement, coordinated by the authorities. Some 7 million people are estimated to have been part of the above-mentioned processes in the years between 1944 and 1950. About 2 million people were resettled to Poland from the territories seized by the USSR. In turn, about 500,000 of Belarusians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians were moved to the USSR. At the same time, some 2.5 million Germans were resettled from the recovered post-German territories in the west

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[5] D. Jarosz, *Polacy a stalinizm 1948–1956*, Warszawa 2000; R. Kaczmarek, *Historia Polski 1914–1989*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2010, pp. 560–569; *Reforma rolna 1944–1945 czy komunistyczna zbrodnia? Dokumenty i materiały, świadectwa, wnioski*, Polskie Towarzystwo Ziemiańskie, Warszawa 2009; F. Starowieyski, K. Uniechowska, *Franciszka Starowieyskiego opowieść o końcu świata, czyli reforma rolna*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1994; H. Słabek, *O społecznej historii Polski 1945–1989*, Książka i Wiedza, Wyższa Szkoła Gospodarki Krajowej w Kutnie, Warszawa 2009, pp. 73–103.

[6] See e.g.: J. Lewandowski, *Rodowód społeczny powojennej inteligencji polskiej (1944–1949)*, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, Szczecin 1991; H. Palska, *Nowa inteligencja w Polsce Ludowej*, Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, Warszawa 1994.

and north, and approximately 1 million had left these areas prior to launching the deportation action.[7]

In the years 1945–1946, over 700,000 Poles deported for forced labour to the Third Reich returned. Another 600,000 of the deportees found themselves in the country due to the redrawing of borders – they were working in German plants located in the areas incorporated to Poland following the war. However, a significant number of Poles remained outside the borders, some 1.6 million in the USSR, and additionally approximately 1.5 million people of Polish descent, whom the Soviets did not recognize as Poles.

Territorial changes, migrations and deportations, which cut off the existing social ties, significantly facilitated taking control over the Polish society by communists. People damaged by several-year-long occupation, in many cases deprived of family support, torn from the place where their families would have lived for generations, were busy mostly with organizing anew their own and their loved ones' lives. In such a situation, the issues of state sovereignty or the legitimacy of the communist authorities were often of secondary importance.

In the political sphere, the above-described processes were reinforced by the activities resulting in the construction of a one-party system in the "people's" Poland, which maintain the appearance of multi-party.

The founding of the Polish United Workers' Party in 1948 is considered as symbolic in the crystallization of the one-party system, although in fact it was only completed in subsequent years. Established in 1949 was the United Peasant Party, whilst the Labour Party was liquidated in 1950, part of its activists having been absorbed by the Democratic Party. The party system being formed at that time was to survive until 1989. The Polish United Workers' Party exercised its prevailing, monopolistic position of the political sovereign, while the United Peasant Party worked as it's "conveyor belt" in the rural areas, and the Democratic Party played a similar role in urban environments. Both smaller parties are termed "satellite" parties by political scientists, and their dependence – both political and personal – on the Polish United Workers' Party was beyond any question.[8]

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[7] R. Kaczmarek, *Historia Polski 1914–1989…*, pp. 545–559; B. Ociepka, *Deportacje, wysiedlenia, przesiedlenia – powojenne migracje z Polski i do Polski*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 2001; H. Słabek, *O społecznej historii Polski…*, pp. 63–72.

[8] See e.g.: J. Wrona, *System partyjny w Polsce 1944–1950. Miejsce, funkcje, relacje partii politycznych w warunkach budowy i utrwalania system u totalitarnego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 1997.

The mature political system in the Stalinist version was, in fact, the monopolistic formula of the communist party's power. State institutions were only a façade, because real power remained in the hands of the Polish United Workers' Party, whose leader was at the same time – regardless of formally held state functions – the actual decision-making centre in every respect relating to public life. The power of the leader was, however, limited to the spheres so indicated by Moscow, while any political plans regarding the other spheres required consultation with the centre of the Soviet empire, or with instructions already given by the Kremlin. The fuse that allowed to control the actions of Polish communists were the Soviets operating in Polish ministries as "advisors", or officers of the Red Army directed to serve in the "people's" Polish Army. In 1944–1956, the dependence of the "people's" Poland on the USSR was almost total.

The key component of Stalinism was ideology, whose extent or effectiveness was strengthened by a tight system of preventive censorship. The communist ideology, one of the pillars of which was the "cult of the leader" – above all, of Joseph Stalin, but in the Eastern bloc countries also of local leaders – also pervaded the sphere of culture. In the Stalinist period, the obligatory style in culture was socialist realism, and never in the history of communism was the ideology imposed on culture with such force. At the same time, the sovietizationof Poland meant uniformity in every sphere of life. Institutions, organizations, and associations existing independently of the communist government were liquidated, and those which were established in their place, or over which the communists took control, were subjected to ideological pressure, their objective having become the activities supporting political power.

The communist ideology, and therefore politics, pervaded every sphere of public life, but the party also made claims to the private life of citizens of the "people's" Poland. It asked for passiveness and for commitment to the system, and considered an opponent any person not engaged enough in building the communist system and supporting the ideology proclaimed by the party, including those communists who declared a communist ideology different from the one presented by the Bolesław Bierut team.

Rebuilt from 1944, the economy was largely nationalized, partially socialized, and free market mechanisms were replaced by the so-called centrally managed economy. In order to phase it in, the so-called Three-Year Plan (1947–1949) was launched, while Stalinism achieved its full

maturity in the economy during the implementation of the Six-Year Plan (1949–1955).[9]

3. Stalinist repression system

One of the pillars of the so-called Stalinist system was a repression apparatus, of which the first-stage objective was to liquidate constitutional authorities, followed by breaking the remaining independence structures – those acting openly and those in conspiracy –and pacification of society, instilling fear, and subordination to the communist authorities.

The repression apparatus served a number of objectives, to point out a few general ones:

- in the years 1944–1948, the basic goal was to take over the state structures using the mechanism of mass repression. At this stage, repression was generally aimed at active opponents of the system and their character was extremely violent;
- in the years 1949–1956, the basic goal was to conquer society using the mechanism of common repression. Repression softened a little, but it affected much wider social circles –also the passive and potential opponents of the system, and their aim was to keep up the atmosphere of fear;[10]

In the initial stage, that is more or less until the autumn of 1945, the domestic repression apparatus played a secondary role in the activities of the Soviet services. For it was primarily the Red Army and secret services of the USSR that destroyed the structures of the Polish Underground State. They also played an important – and sometimes decisive – role in pacifying independence organizations being formed upon the dissolution of the Home Army. The repression apparatus turned against the independence environments continuing activities of the Polish Underground State – whether overtly (the Polish Peasant Party

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[9] See e.g.: R. Kaczmarek, *Historia Polski 1914–1989…*, pp. 570–613; A.L. Sowa, *Historia polityczna Polski 1944–1991*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2011, pp. 127–192.

[10] See e.g.: A. Dudek, A. Paczkowski, *Polska*, in: *Czekiści. Organy bezpieczeństwa w europejskich krajach bloku sowieckiego 1944–1989*, ed. K. Persak, Ł. Kamiński, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2010, p. 393–457; A. A. Paczkowski, *Polacy pod obcą i własną przemocą*, in: *Czarna księga komunizmu. Zbrodnie, terror, prześladowania*, introduction to the Polish edition K. Kersten, Prószyńskii s-ka, Warszawa, no issue date available, pp. 351–359.

or Labour Party), or covertly (the post-Home Army structures – with the "Freedom and Independence" or national ones – with the National Military Union) but also against pre-war activists and politicians representing the ethos of the independent Second Polish Republic. These activities created the conditions for installing the communist administration.

After the pacification of overt and covert resistance, after the January 1947 elections falsified by the communists, there followed general terror, aimed at conquering the society. Repressions began to affect not only those who continued fighting for an independent country, but also potential opponents of the communist system, and even those communists who were considered representatives of the political group opposing sovietization in the form imposed by the Bolesław Bierut team. At that time, various repressions hit those people whom the security service would associate with: state service in the Second Polish Republic; peasants opposing collectivization; former activists of the Polish Underground State; activists of the postwar underground –both political and military (including those who emerged during the so-called Amnesty), as well as people who cooperated with them or offered support; former activists and collaborators of open opposition parties; youth, who at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s were involved in building underground independence organizations; the clergy – above all, the Catholic one, and to a lesser degree also other churches and religions, including, among others, Jehovah's Witnesses; people accused of so-called word-of-mouth propaganda (i.e, telling political jokes or criticizing the communist system in private conversations); people who would maintain contact with those in political exile or even people outside the Eastern Bloc (accused of espionage); private entrepreneurs and craftsmen (often accused of speculation); workers (accused, for example, of economic sabotage); communist activists having a different vision of the communization process in Poland from that one represented by the Bolesław Bierut team (accused of rightist-nationalist deviation).

The situation began to change in the mid-1950s. After the death of Józef Stalinin March 1953, the symptoms of the "thaw" in the Soviet bloc and thus the departure from the so-called Stalinism became noticeable, which was related, among other things, to a decline in the repressions of communist systems. However, the process was not homogenous in the Eastern bloc. In the "people's" Poland, it was much delayed. 1953 marked the climax of activities directed against the Catholic Church (among the distinguishing indicators thereof were the so-called trial of the Kraków Curia, trial of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek, and the internment of the Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński).

In the years 1944–1956, the security service was one of the basic tools of the communist party used for purposes of deep reconstruction of the social structure. The natural state elite: the activists and soldiers of the Polish Underground State, who during the World War II had borne the burden of fighting for independence, were annihilated. The refugee elites were rejected the possibility of returning to the country. Outside the post-Yalta Polish borders, outstanding representatives of the Polish political and cultural world were stranded along with a significant part of the Polish army. Their subordinates in the country were murdered, imprisoned, forced to keep silent or to collaborate. Repressions targeted at those political activists and guerrillas who continued their fight for independence – many a time pre-war officers – resulted in the patriotic elite having been murdered or destroyed through incarceration.

The communist repression system was extensive and included a number of institutions whose activities complemented one another. Its main components were:

1. Civilian political police or the Public Security Department (1944), the Ministry of Public Security (1945–1954), the Committee on Public Security (1954–1956);

2. Citizens' Militia (subordinated to the Ministry of Public Security);

3. Military Intelligence – meaning counterintelligence and political police in the "people's" Polish Army;

4. Reconnaissance Unit of the Border Protection Forces;

5. Board of the 2nd General Staff of the "people's" Polish Army;

6. Judicial authorities, the Military District Courts and Military District Prosecutor's Offices were key for the so-called political issues, but there also existed secret sections in common courts or special criminal courts;

7. Out-of-court adjudication institutions: Special Committee on Combating Fraud and Economic Malpractice, magistrates courts;

8. The prison and forced-labour camp system.[11]

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[11] See e.g.: S. Cenckiewicz, *Długie ramię Moskwy. Wywiad wojskowy Polski Ludowej 1943–1991*. Zysk i spółka, Warszawa 2011, pp. 47–126; P. Fiedorczyk, *Komisja Specjalna do Walki z Nadużyciami i Szkodnictwem Gospodarczym 1945–1954. Studium historycznoprawne*, Temida, Białystok 2002; B. Kopka, *Obozy pracy w Polsce 1944–1950. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Ośrodek KARTA, Warszawa 2002; R. Leśkiewicz, R. Peterman, *Wojskowe organy bezpieczeństwa państwa*, in: *Historyczno-prawna analiza struktur organów bezpieczeństwa państwa w Polsce Ludowej (1944–1990). Zbiór studiów*, ed. A. Jusupović, R. Leśkiewicz, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2013, passim; P. Majer, *Milicja Obywatelska w systemie organów władzy PRL: zarys problematyki i źródła*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2003; K. Szwagrzyk, *Prawnicy*

A tight-knit system of various institutions making up the repressive apparatus allowed for targeting large social groups through internal intelligence operations, investigations (most often violent ones, during which physical and psychological torture was applied), to sentencing and imprisoning or detaining inforced-labour camps. These activities were accompanied by severe harassments towards persons considered to be opponents or potential opponents of the communist regime, administrative penalties, surcharge tax, foreclosure of property, dismissal from work, hindering access to studies, etc.

The scale of the applied "fear engineering" may to some extent–but not precisely–be reflected through statistical data. In the years 1944–1946, the Soviet services arrested in the territory of the postwar Poland about 50,000 people, a large part of whom were then sent into the depths of the USSR (among them were not just Poles, but also Germans or Red Army deserters). This figure should be increased by an unspecified number of people repressed in the Polish Easter Borderlands incorporated into the USSR. In the years 1944–1956, the civilian security services arrested at least 250,000 people. At the same time, according to estimates, in 1947 alone, in connection with the elections falsified by the communists, there could be as many "detainees" without being presented any charges as 100,000, while in 1944–1956 it was probably no less than 400,000 people. At the same time, it is estimated that in the years 1944–1956 Soviet and Polish security forces killed about 9,000 people in fights (not only Poles, but also, for instance, activists of the nationalist Ukrainian organizations). The military courts themselves sentenced over 70,000 people in the years 1944–1953. At the same time, we are aware that in the years 1944–1955 military courts rendered about 8,000 death sentences, of which about half were executed. Over 20,000 people died in prisons and detention centres.[12]

The Stalinist system was a consistent mechanism maintaining full dependency of the citizens of "people's" Poland – ostensibly on the state, but in fact on the communist party.

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czasu bezprawia. Sędziowie i prokuratorzy wojskowi w Polsce 1944–1956, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Kraków–Wrocław 2005, pp. 33–92; T. Wolsza, *W cieniu Wronek, Jaworzna i Piechcina… 1945–1956. Życie codzienne w polskich więzieniach, obozach i ośrodkach pracy więźniów*, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa 2003; M. Zaborski, *Ustrój sądów wojskowych w Polsce w latach 1944–1955*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2005.

[12] K. Madej, J. Żaryn, J. Żurek, *Wstęp*, in: *Księga świadectw. Skazani na karę śmierci w czasach stalinowskich i ich losy*, ed. iidem, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2003, p. XXI-XXXVIII.

4. The Deconstruction of the Stalinist system

The decline of the Stalinist system in the eastern bloc began after the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953. The pace of its deconstruction in the Eastern bloc varied. In the "people's" Poland, initially it was fully controlled by the communists and first concerned the economic sphere, then the cultural sphere, and only the fleeing to the west of one of the high-ranking officers of the secret police gave it afresh impetus. Publicizing by the Radio Free Europe of so far hidden information about the essence of the communist system in Poland, its dependence on Moscow, the scale of repression, and the true goals of party activists for a moment destabilized the otherwise fully controlled process of the "thaw". The party managed to take control over it again, though the fear of the system decreased significantly, which was important for the eruption of aspirations for freedom. The workers' revolt in Poznań in June 1956, the destabilization of the party team following the death of Bolesław Bierut in Moscow, Khrushchev's criticism of Stalinism were the key elements giving rise to political changes and the final collapse of the totalitarian system in Poland.[13] Although the discussion on what the communist system was, following the "thaw", has continued to date – the prevailing conviction seems to be that the post-1956 system was a system displaying totalitarian tendencies, but notonetotally fulfilling the definition of totalitarianism.

5. Conclusion

The studies conducted so far on Stalinism have emphasized the issues related to the repression and communist ideology, as well as the mechanism of virtual autocracy of leaders of political parties. Even research showing social issues is in fact limited to the problematic or quantitative definition of the discussed issue. The concept of "social engineering" was only associated with the process of exchanging political elites or building a "new socialist" man. Meanwhile, this was only one of the elements, complemented by the reversal of the social ladder. If we analyze the mechanism of Stalinism or the process of Sovietization

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[13] See e.g.: J. Karpiński, *Wykres gorączki. Polska pod rządami komunistycznymi*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2001, pp. 39–170; P. Machcewicz, *Polski rok 1956*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Mówią Wieki, Warszawa 1993; A.L. Sowa, *Historia polityczna Polski 1944–1991…*, pp. 193–288.

of Poland, it will, in all its spheres, consist in the elimination of traditional values, environments, institutions, and mechanisms, to replace them with new ones modelled on those already functioning in the USSR. The essence of Stalinism was therefore not a reconstruction or taking over control, but a violent mechanism of elimination and replacement.

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