
An Introduction to an Analysis of the Question

The author’s intention was to throw some light onto an area of research into the activities of the special services in the People’s Republic of Poland (PRP) which has thus far been passed over by historians, including the staff of the Institute of National Remembrance. The topic in question is that of the question of the operational oversight of the entities of the national economy by the Ministry of the Interior’s (MSW) Security Service.

The disproportion between the status of studies on the surveillance of the opposition milieu and the Catholic Church, on the one hand and the issue of the MSW’s interference in the economic life of the country on the other, is the outcome of the somewhat understandable research priorities for post-1989 Polish historiography. However, neither the fact that the matter is complicated nor the difficulties which accompany an expert analysis of the documents generated and collected by the Security Service as part of their operational and reconnoitring activities as regards economic departments, nationalised economic enterprises and private companies, are not without significance in terms of the failure to include those activities in the scholarly discourse to date.

The article comprises three fundamental sections. In the first, the author introduces, in as digested a form as is possible, the twists and turns in the functioning of the Security Service during the final decade of the PRP. The second presents a sketch of the economic transformations instigated by General Wojciech Jaruzelski’s cabinet with a view to salvaging the socialist economy by means of pervading it with free-market elements and strengthening, inter alia, the significance of the PRP’s banking system. Finally, in the third, most crucial part, the author analyses and, wherever possible, endeavours to evaluate, the operational oversight of banking undertaken in the 1980s by the Section IV division of Department V of the Ministry of the Interior as regards Poland’s five most important banks, namely Narodowy Bank Polski (the National Bank of Poland), Bank Handlowy SA, PeKaO SA, BRE SA and PKO Bank Polski.